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Arthur H. Jones

# Brother Azarias

THE LIFE STORY .. ..  
OF AN AMERICAN MONK

BY  
REV. JOHN TALBOT SMITH, LL.D.

AUTHOR OF  
"THE TRAINING OF A PRIEST," "A WOMAN OF  
CULTURE," "SOLITARY ISLAND," "HIS HONOR  
THE MAYOR," "SARANAC," ETC. .. ..

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What thou art, that thou art : nor canst thou be said to be greater  
than God seeth thee to be.—A KEMPIS

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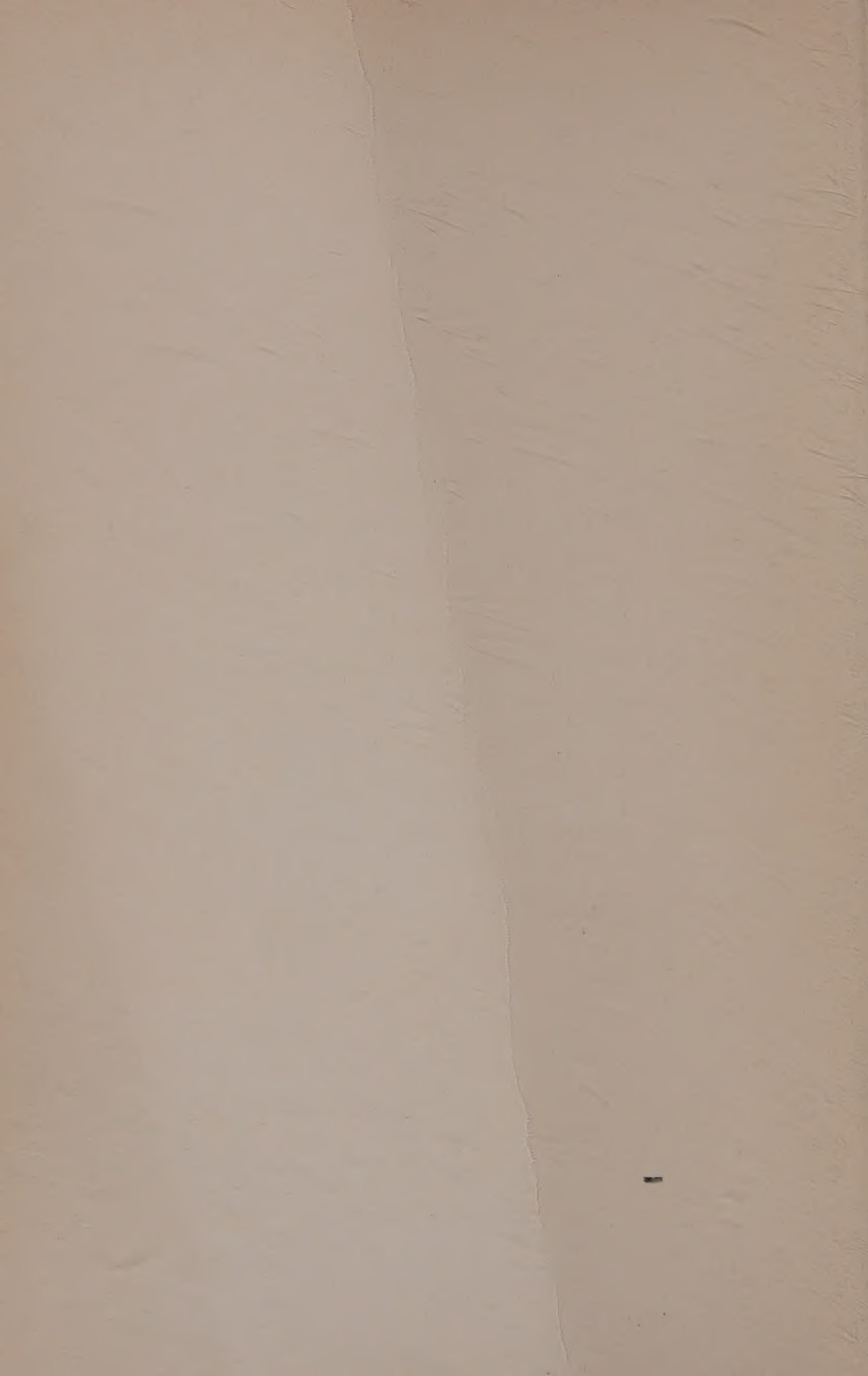
To the  
Blessed John Baptist De La Salle

FRIEND OF YOUTH AND PATRON OF  
EDUCATION,

AND

His Faithful Disciples, the Brothers of the  
Christian Schools,

whose severe lives and noble devotion to  
the cause of true education deserve all  
praise, this account of their honored son  
and brother is respectfully dedicated.



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE MAN.

THE history of a human being, no matter how commonplace may have been his career and his achievements, is not without that interest which attaches to a tragedy. Simple or accomplished he has struggled, often to the point of deep anguish, with the grave problem of his own existence; and the pathos of his entrance on the scene of life is deepened by the everlasting silence which follows upon his exit. No man looks at a grave with indifference. It is the closed volume whose title is the name and epitaph graven on the stone. This biography shall every man have, and the book will not lack sympathetic readers. Therefore few biographies are without justification, and the least justified teaches its moral. It is the strength of fiction that it may be defined as the common man's biography; he who has no right to special place in a library under his own name can still see the world interested in the details of his domestic life, of his loves and hates, of his politics, of his mere living and doing and dying; and tears are shed over his fate in fiction by many who think him not worth a scornful glance in real life. In fact the popularity of the novel has diminished former interest in biography, which must confine itself to real personages and avoid other romance than the actual



quantity contained in their lives. Perhaps biography will become in consequence more and more the servant of the startling figures of history; those lives which run to a finish like a well-written drama, with convenient climaxes, striking scenery, and a splendid mingling of pathos and tragedy. A true biography must be the history of a leader, that is, of one who was a force in his time, whether he lost or won his battle, fought for the right or against it; or it may be the description of a being who was the last product of many forces, their flower and fruit, typical of that which produced him. It is not alone the greatness of the subject which justifies a biography and makes the biographer's task difficult, but rather the complexity of a career. We have not yet had, with all the strivings of eminent writers, an adequate history of Napoleon. It is doubtful if such a book can be written, for personality has its mysteries no less than the vegetable kingdom. Napoleon may have had a nature of the simplest. However, his tragic relationships with so many nations, policies, persons have made necessary a biography for each of these relationships.

Simple and obscure lives, like that which Brother Azarias lived for nearly half a century, are unlikely to give much reason for a book. They are without dramatic strength and variety, are lacking in incident, and have no climaxes. In his case certain strong contrasts make up for these deficiencies, and impart to the story of his career an interest not found in the average biography. He was an Irishman who became in fact and sympathy an American; an American who became a monk in spite of his environment,

and who clung to his vows, indifferent to the ridicule which they excite in certain minds; a monk who chose the routine of a teaching life when he might have stood in the sacerdotal rank; a clever student of his century, well acquainted with its glories, an admirer of its achievements, who despised its trend and labored sincerely to change its aims for truer and better. He attached himself to a lay community which in its earlier days was unknown to Protestants, and was often misunderstood and cheaply held by Catholics. The commercial world cannot understand a monk who is not a priest. Brother Azarias deliberately chose for his career a simple but noble office, teaching the young, in an age which surpasses imperial Rome by its passion for popular regard. And when his maturity came, when the illusions of youth and enthusiasm had vanished forever, by word and act he joyfully accepted over again every restriction and every bond with which in his youth he had bound himself. Such a life leaves an agreeable flavor on the tongue that tells it. It fills the ear with music and the heart with comfort and strength. The printed page gives out its perfume. For one part of our American world it has the charm of novelty. Its contrast with the average of American life is rather violent in fact, for none can understand—the spiritual Christian excepted—the motives which rule such a life and make it both reasonable and delightful.

Some grasp of it can be secured when its standards and achievements are made known. Brother Azarias was a Catholic from his infancy, and a member of a religious community from his fifteenth year; to answer the demands of his faith and his vocation was

the effort of his life. From any point of view the Christian ideal of perfection is lofty and very difficult of attainment. For the trained Catholic the keeping of the commandments is fairly easy; and even the keeping of the vows of the religious life, poverty, obedience, chastity, is not so difficult to the true monk. The spirit which breathes in commandment and vow is the real difficulty. To acquire and hold it is a severe task for nature, and the instances are common where a pretty faithful observer of the laws and the counsels fails dismally in getting the spirit of Christ. To acquire this spirit and give it control of his career seemed to be the chief aim of Brother Azarias in life; and close observers of him felt that it would be hard to find in any community a soul more patient, humble, and forgiving; his charity in speech was of the kind that would have pleased St. James; his humility with superior and servant seemed to be as perfect in intention as it was in act.

He endeavored to carry the spirit of Christ into all the relationships of life, of which he held many before his death. He filled various positions in his congregation, from the office of teacher to the presidency of a noted institution. He was a tireless student; his written opinions on educational matters were often sought by his superiors. He aided in the production of text-books for his pupils. His public career made heavy demands upon his time and strength. He had his share of mental and physical suffering; the world offered him many inducements to leave his cloister. In all these conditions he was ever the earnest striver after the truth and the humble follower of Christ. He had a keen sense of the re-

sponsibilities of his vocation, which urged him to continuous effort to fit himself for the labor. To the last he prepared the day's lesson for a class of boys with the same conscientiousness used in preparing a paper for a learned society. His course was ever upward. Without the aid of a university training he secured for himself a scholarship of breadth and accuracy. He spoke and wrote French fairly, and could read German, Italian, Spanish, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and Sanskrit; his training in mathematics was above the average; his acquaintance with modern literatures was sound, and he had a special love and knowledge of English letters. Philosophy was his favorite science, and his stronghold was the history of philosophic thought. In the pursuit of this study he acquired his deep interest in the history and the methods of popular education. It made him an eclectic in philosophy, and drew from Brownson the remark that he could have derived the philosophy of his writings from no particular system.

His style is permeated by the philosophic spirit, which lends to his writings true dignity. That spirit raised him above the heats of partisanship, as the true teacher should ever be, and kept his essays free from controversy. His method was to present a thesis from the standpoint of the believing Christian, without other than implied reference to the religious beliefs of an opponent—a method which at once secured for him a hearing from that multitude which has a distrust of controversy. He was called for on every side by those who wished to hear the Catholic interpretation of great ideas, great movements, and great men. Societies and institutions, Catholic and

non-Catholic, invited him to lecture for them on the Catholic method of studying and solving the world's problems. Editors sought articles from his pen. His correspondence with the learned assumed dimensions before his death. At the close of his life his influence promised to become large in circles hitherto closed to Catholics. Any scholar of merit might well have been satisfied with the honors so generously bestowed upon Brother Azarias by the judicious. These honors may be regarded as a tribute to the correctness of his method and the fine social quality of his character. The world is tired of the controversialists with their texts and their traditions, very tired of their methods. Prejudiced as our American world is against the Catholic and the monk, it was interested in Brother Azarias because he was both; and undoubtedly that interest was maintained by his avoidance of the controversial methods. He did not open a thesis with the flat assumption that his hearers were heretics. His only assumption was that they wished to hear Catholic truth described in the Catholic way by an authority. Moreover, he attracted his hearers by his simplicity and his sociability. It was a surprise to them to find a monk so human, their ideal monk being a fat clown or a dark and cunning intriguer or a gloomy fanatic. It was a novelty for them to hear a really American monk discoursing on their favorite topics, although he was not the monk of their legends. His voice was heard in their most dignified gatherings, and he was always invited to return. In a few years he might have divided with such men as Gilman the popular regard. He would have been to the students what Boyle O'Reilly had

been to the Puritans, and what Archbishop Hughes had been to the country. These men were the interpreters of Catholic thought to the multitude. Their success is an indication of the great need of capable interpreters.

The volumes which Brother Azarias left to his readers are works of sincerity, power, beauty, rich in the merits of clear thinking, graceful style, and original method. Their subject-matter and treatment easily explain his increasing influence. The fruit of his studies in early English literature was a careful essay on old English thought, which does justice to the Catholic spirit of Cædmon's time; his "Philosophy of Literature" is a clever work which drew a eulogy from Brownson; the treatment given to Aristotle by the Schoolmen was ably explained and defended in a little volume entitled "Aristotle and the Schools"; and four volumes of essays on educational, religious, literary, and philosophical subjects bear witness to the industrious study of twenty years. The merit of his work lay chiefly in its thoroughness, its depth, its simplicity, and its calmness. On topics which have stirred the passions of men most deeply he writes with the mental poise of a philosopher from Altruria, in a clear, serene style, the reflection of his own spirit. His accuracy is admirable, for he left few authorities unread. His spirituality is high and comprehensible. He was so thorough a believer in what may be called the American idea, for want of a more precise term, as to accept its solution of many problems of the time. It is easy to see why his books and his personality became all at once so interesting to the American world. His friendly critics



were agreed in admiration of the friendly and charitable spirit which ruled his life and informed his writings.

One wrote: "It would be difficult to find a more attractive picture of the relations existing among friends, wholly unlike in their views of the great questions which engage the thought of the age, than those which Brother Azarias sustained toward non-Catholics; with a heart so kindly and a sympathy so comprehensive he gained and retained the friendship of men of all creeds and of all parties." Another wrote: "His instrument was truth; truth in theory and practice; truth taught and truth lived; truth in ideals and truth in facts. He saw the universality and the harmony of truth amid all apparent discords and limitations, and he followed truth wherever it led." A third wrote: "It is to Brother Azarias we shall trace many lines of reaction against the barrenness of materialism in philosophy and the rottenness of the so-called realism in literature. He was the centre of a group of choice spirits who refused to subscribe to the doctrine that there is no spirit world. They converge their best thoughts upon the soul and its destiny. Brother Azarias nobly labored to set forth the profound philosophy and the canons of the church in such a way as to attract the careful attention of his contemporaries, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Agnostic." Archbishop Keane said: "His richest bequest is his constant, varied, always beautiful assertion of the great truth that man's thinking and doing are at their best only when pervaded by the Divine. He will be admired as a philosophic thinker, as a literary artist, as an acute and judicious

critic; but most gratefully will he be remembered and most deservedly honored as a Christian educator." These testimonies serve to show how his work impressed different minds. He convinced the stubbornest of his sincerity. It was only through his books and his daily life he could be fully known; for his personal appearance was not striking, and his manner, while always calm and dignified, was diffident. He spoke little unless on the topics connected with his studies—so little that his closest friends went years without hearing complaint or mere gossip from him. Yet he attracted all sorts of people, and men speedily learned that his soul and his special vocation were more to him than anything the world could offer him; and learned also the depth of his spirit, the breadth of his views, the deep love he cherished for his kind, his country and its institutions. In a brief acquaintance with him associates felt how much of a man he was, and how closely he fitted into his own times.

A man of this stamp is certain to be representative of the society into which he is born, which moulds him, and which afterwards he helps to mould. This fact lends interest to the story of his life, and affords a becoming excuse for a biographer. When the world finds him attractive and potent, the process of his evolution becomes attractive. His family, race, country, and environment are studied, to explain him and to increase the charm of his work and his personality. In this way Brother Azarias stands forth in his simplicity and humility a concrete image of things which prejudice looks upon as abstractions, a living evidence of many unseen forces working mightily be-

neath the surface. As an Irishman he vindicates his race, often described by English scorn as inferior to its fellows; a deep and richly gifted student, he is himself a reply to the charge that his country is unfavorable to deep study and patient research; a fervent Catholic, he makes absurd the accusation that the church or religious faith dreads knowledge; a true American, in that higher sense which sees in our country an idea destined to shape the world's destiny, his patriotism is a rebuke to the popular intolerance; a monk deeply in love with the cloister, his social qualities vindicate the religious life against those who think that it stifles human feeling; and to his congregation he is a tower of strength against popular clamor, an argument against specious objections that its sphere is too limited, its views too narrow, and its routine too depressing. In all his relations with life Brother Azarias showed himself a clear-headed, patient, resolute, reasonable human being, able to give an account of himself and his career to his brethren, and sufficiently in love with his kind to address them at all times without prejudice or bad temper.

Finally, he is a picturesque figure in American society, charming us by contrast and novelty; a lay monk from the Middle Ages, who rebukes us pleasantly and forcefully for our lack of faith, our indifference to the historic past, our ignorance of the forces around us. We may deny to his theories truth or practicability, but are forced to admit that he is a very taking illustration of them. He may not always convince us, but his efforts please and often fascinate. We recognize that he is closer to the life of past ages than we are, and also that he is very much in touch

with the present. What he is and what he teaches really provide the world with an original flavor, and the world, ever eager for new sauces, is grateful. It may regret that Brother Azarias chose to be a Catholic, an American, a monk, a teacher; but it understands that he might not have been so dear to its capricious taste in other conditions. His gentle and useful life is ended. None deserves better to live in the hearts of his people than the brave and simple soul who first ran counter to all the prejudices of his nation by his manner of life, and then taught the nation in persuasive style to respect that life of devoted labor for his sake.

## CHAPTER II.

### AN AMERICAN VILLAGE.

BROTHER AZARIAS was born in the county of Tipperary, Ireland, on June 29th of the year 1847. His birthplace was the neighborhood of Killenaule, where a number of men, since eminent in the Church in America, first saw the light. Among them were Archbishop Feehan of Chicago, Archbishop Ryan of Philadelphia, and Brother Patrick, who died in Paris after holding for many years the arduous office of assistant-superior-general of the Christian Brothers. The family name was Mullany, and Brother Azarias was baptized Patrick Francis. The first ten years of his life were spent in his native town, partly in his father's house, and for a few years under the care of an aunt. His father emigrated to the United States in 1851, and thinking his eldest son too delicate for the fatigues of the journey, left him behind in his aunt's care. She was a woman of parts, and had received a good education in Holland. Under her guidance the boy first learned to love study and books. She directed his efforts and formed his taste, and with the aid of a competent schoolmaster of the town she had made the lad a good student before he left Ireland. The Mullany family was of means and importance in Killenaule, as the number of its members in the Church and in the professions bears witness.

It was deeply Catholic and ardently patriotic. Patrick Mullany was a precocious boy in a healthful way, and before he departed from his native soil had imbibed those sentiments of religion and race which have sustained so well in the United States the critical process of transplanting.

His father settled in Deerfield, a small village in central New York, made notable by the residence there of Horatio Seymour, popularly known as the Sage of Deerfield, who figured in the history of the time as the war governor of his State and the leader of the Democratic party for many years. His fame gave Deerfield prominence, although it was the most ordinary of villages, and has since been eclipsed locally by the rise of its immediate neighbor, the city of Utica. Its history and character are typical of a hundred towns in the State, once noted for their enterprise, as enterprise went in those days, but entirely out of the race since the advent of the railroad changed all conditions. When the Mullany family settled on a farm in the township, Deerfield was just beginning to feel the coming changes. It was stagnant in religion as well as in business, and had become too fond of its old routine to rouse itself at the summons of the new spirit that breathed in the younger towns. Its people were the descendants of the Dutch of New York and the Puritans of New England, a peaceful, orderly, industrious race, slow of speech, prudent in action, domestic in their habits, rich enough to cultivate a leisure which soon degenerated into indifference. The women were neat, home-loving, and perfect in old-fashioned courtesy. The refinement of these simple people was a thing to be remembered



with delight; too little of it has passed to their descendants, who seem in such great haste to acquire fortunes that time cannot be lost in cultivating elegance.

The exodus of the Irish to America did not at first disturb the mental routine of these quiet people and their leaders, although it had already attracted the attention of the thoughtful both in England and in the United States. In the former country it was welcomed as the natural and happy solution of a grave problem. Many English leaders were indecent in expressing their joy over what appeared to be the last misfortune of an unfortunate people. Moreover, in the then prevalent national dislike of things American, they rejoiced in this outpouring of detested millions upon a political and social fabric which had been erected and sustained in defiance of English power. At this date it is possible to speak without passion of the flight of the Irish from their oppressors. What then threatened to become a tremendous misfortune resulted in the providential checking of the growth of English influence in important parts of the earth, and later in the partial triumph of the Celt in Ireland and elsewhere. A common language and literature, similarity of disposition, customs, and habits, intermarriage, friendship, make Irishmen and Englishmen personally agreeable to one another. They harmonize in social and official life easily. In the majority of Irishmen there is a kindly tendency to let the dead past remain dead for the sake of present comfort; not at the cost of present progress, of course, nor to the point of surrendering the advantages of victory; for kindly feeling does not mean a minute's delay in the march toward political equality.

These facts English rulers have steadily and selfishly ignored, and have never made them the basis of their relationships with the Irish; and so it was with something like contempt that they encouraged the exodus to America. Mournful as this outpouring was at first, at the last it causes tears only to the English.

Very quietly the exiles made their way into the country, where they were needed to dig canals and construct railroads, to fill the factories and become the servants of the dominant race. They settled where wages were good and work plentiful, filling New England, the Middle States, and the near West. They soon became voters, and found themselves of importance at election time. Little by little they crept into every walk of life, until their representatives held positions very close to the throne. Some day a capable and enthusiastic historian will trace their course from the shovel and the pick to the cabinet, and show the far-reaching effects upon English influence and American thought of the Irish current, so mercilessly forced into Western seas by the nation which has suffered most, and must suffer on for many a decade, from its own crime. In this book it is fitting to give no more than the mere outlines of its history, inasmuch as Brother Azarias illustrated one of its phases in his own life. On its negative side the exodus was anti-British and anti-Protestant, characteristics which it possesses to this day. Wherever is found in the professions, in business, in politics a representative man of Irish descent, a dominant feeling with him is certain to be an active dislike of Britain. There have been many such men since the Civil War,—Sheridan, Shields, O'Connor, Boyle

O'Reilly, Eugene Kelly, T. Addis Emmet, who were only in the van of an army of military men, lawyers, physicians, writers, politicians, merchants, churchmen, artists, and educators. Whether Irishmen or the sons of Irishmen, interested in the Irish cause or indifferent, they carried everywhere an innate suspicion, or distrust, or dislike and hatred of the English name. Had England been the friend and ally of the United States, the children of the exodus would have destroyed both friendship and alliance; but under the circumstances it was a simple task to second the very successful efforts of British statesmen in building up between the empire and the republic an age-long enmity. Americans might have learned to forgive the wrongs of 1776 and 1812; they can hardly forgive the meannesses of 1861.

On its positive side the Irish invasion of the United States was healthful and stimulating, and greatly aided the forces which in time destroyed Puritanism among the sects. The disintegrating influence of Emerson and the Transcendentalists had already begun its work, while on the other hand the spirit of the Oxford movement had kindled a fire in the opposite camp. Practical religion had no deep hold of the people, who were divided into two groups, the formalists and the indifferentists. A mouldiness was perceptible in the whole religious structure. Men frequented the churches, but neglected the commandments, and sins against chastity and the family had ceased to excite public contempt. Christian morality had lost its hold on great masses of the people, which was the most surprising fact of all those met by the Catholic immigrant in his first years of settlement.

The ministers were not aggressive in their work, and as far as the smaller villages were concerned seemed to have only a professional or business interest in preaching the gospel. The condition of such villages was pitiable. They were visited only at intervals by the preachers, who passed on without so much as having stirred the surface. Their inhabitants were outside Christian influence, formed a class by themselves, were cut off by the self-respecting for their scorn of conventionalities, and were much detested by the church-going parts of the community, whose conduct was certainly better, inasmuch as it avoided offence to public sentiment. I recall a score of such towns in the Susquehanna valley, whose villagers were a generous, kindly, lazy crew, with gypsy tastes for easy living and promiscuous wandering about the State. Practically they were owned by the rich farmers and manufacturers, received their wages in clothes and provisions at the employers' prices, never had any money and rarely took trouble, paid no attention to religion unless to jibe the ministers, or to while away an hour in unprofitable argument on the Bible, satisfied their natural appetites in any way that spared thought or exertion, married in a haphazard way and rarely sought a legal separation, dispensing with the divorce court when they did, were utterly without prejudice against Catholics and willing to hear their views of Christianity, and lived and died with fine indifference to the present or the hereafter.

Deerfield was not far from many such towns, but, satisfied with its own orderly observance of religious forms, it was not worrying over the condition of its

neighbors, an indifference which extended itself to the Irish-Catholic immigrant. The Mullany family received an easy welcome as the representatives of a race made barbarous to the American mind by the English tradition. At first the easy-going people were attracted by the novelty of an Irish settler, and were not wanting in neighborly courtesies. The English propaganda of later years was not then in existence, and information as to the Irish was got through the ordinary popular books. The Irish were therein classified as a half-civilized race, wholly under the domination of the Scarlet Woman, but kept in perpetual penance by Protestant England. It was pleasant to the people of Deerfield that they spoke the English language, though with a brogue, and thoroughly admired such incidents as the battle of Bunker Hill. Mr. Mullany was a positive character, sprung from an intensely nationalist family, which had given many of its members to exile and the scaffold. When opportunity offered he made his neighbors well acquainted with his religious and political opinions. In time the natives were made to feel that much of ancient history is more English than truthful. The Mullany family did not find it difficult to cultivate friendly relations with the villagers, and its head soon had a business footing in the town, which he held with increasing respect until his death at an advanced age.

Dry rot and Emerson had attacked the religious spirit of these people together, and the Oxford movement and the Irish exodus came at the right moment to aid them in repelling the attack. The immigrants brought with them the splendid faith of their race

and the imposing ritual of the Church, which in the briefest time revolutionized the ritual of the sects, whose churches were mean, whose ceremonies were few and bare, and whose dread of symbol, statue, and painting was so great that even the statue of Christ was a rarity. They kept no Christian holidays of the historic class. As far as expression was concerned American Christianity was almost dumb. The Irish exodus helped to change all for the better. At this moment there is a general and poetic recognition of Easter and Christmas in the sectarian churches; their music and ceremonies are more elaborate; use is made of statue, painting, and often of vestments; church buildings are no longer hideous in form; and the cross is rarely absent from steeple and tower. The holy seasons of the year have found their way into the national customs, and even the pagan must respect them. A great change was also effected in the social life of the period, which lost its old, gloomy staidness before the infectious hilarity of the Irish settler. He imported into the country the free and hearty hospitality of pastoral Ireland, the devil-may-care spirit, wit, and fun of the peasant; he danced in the groves on holidays; the fiddler and the ballad-singer were always in his house; troops of old-country neighbors spent whole days at one house feasting and gossiping. Upon these scenes the strict native gazed with pity, contempt, and horror, but ended by adopting the milder Irish methods of lightening the weary hours; and in turn the immigrant adopted the milder proprieties of native society, his children losing in consequence much of his wit and spontaneity. But the native and the immigrant were wholly uncon-



scious of their mutual influence upon each other, and the native has cultivated a pretentious ignorance of this influence up to the present moment. Regarding the Irish as an inferior race, likely to remain so under the dominant Saxon, mere hewers of wood and drawers of water, poor makers of bricks without straw, he gave himself no trouble over their coming multitudes and their very humble presence.

This indifference naturally changed to astonishment and blind rage when the magnitude of the exodus was made known and the old difficulty arose—the old problem which had given England so much trouble, and had led her rulers into so many crimes. The Irish despised the heresy of Luther and would not give up the faith of Christ. The priest accompanied them in their wanderings, said mass and administered the sacraments in their shanties, built church, school, and residence where his people finally settled in numbers, encouraged them to enter business and politics, and helped them to secure the best positions in trade and in office. English law had kept them out of commerce, but had made them adepts in practical politics. Ten years before the Civil War began the Irish were comfortably located and well organized in their new homes. This almost magical success so stirred both the English observers and the American sects that the one ceased to congratulate the nation upon getting rid of the Irish and the other turned persecutor. The Knownothing storm arose. Blandishment was tried at first, then bribery, and at last persecution; the public school was made an engine of proselytism; obstinate Catholic children were ill-treated, while the willing were petted and praised,

sent to good positions, adopted into exclusive society, and tenderly coaxed out of their faith. Employment was refused to Catholics where work could be done without them, and the common legend was hung up in places of employment: "No Irish need apply."

Persecution promptly changed the character of the persecuted. Under the kindly French bishops who ruled the church at the opening of the Knownothing movement, the Catholics were a peaceful, diffident, and courteous people, eager to please the natives and to adopt their ways, to learn from them and to imitate them even to the point of copying their faults. The trustee system for church organization is an instance in point. It suited the genius of the sects, and was adopted by many Catholic parishes in the State of New York, with the result that harmonious action between priest and people became impossible, because both became the subjects of a board of irresponsible lay trustees. Archbishop Hughes put an end to the grievance, and took advantage of the period of persecution to introduce radical reforms. By degrees the hierarchy changed from French to Irish, and in a short time the bishops were mainly Irish by birth or descent, a fact which intensified English dread of the American situation. The success of these prelates in ruling their flocks, putting an end to domestic discord, and fighting the proselytizers with pen, speech, newspaper, and school, helped to bring the Knownothing persecution to a head. It is possible that more importance might have attached to that movement, and greater success, had not the Civil War sunk minor issues out of sight. In that war the Irish were almost to a man on the side of the North,

while their English enemy took the side of the South, and made themselves as odious to the American nation as Irish sympathy became dear to the sorely tried people. The final result was the passing of persecution.

It came only with years of struggle. The battle was fought out in the little villages as well as in the towns; in the school no less than in the forum; by the little children, who had often to suffer more for race and faith than their parents. Mr. Mullany sent his two boys to the union school in Deerfield, where they received object-lessons in differences of creed and race between them and their fellows. To be Irish was a disgrace, to be Catholic a crime, and to be both was pure treason. The agitation in religious, social, and political circles affected the children, who turned persecutors against their Catholic school-fellows. Weeks of petty annoyance culminated in a free fight, sufficiently fierce to clear the atmosphere for the reign of gentle peace afterward. Patrick Mullany endured this experience, having found it necessary to punish his chief persecutor, a certain pugnacious farmer lad. The headmaster found them one day encircled by their mates and ready for battle. Although an Orangeman, he secured fair play for his Irish pupil, thinking it better to have the boys end all differences at once in the fine old fashion of the British land. The future monk won the day, for at that time he was of sturdy build, and satisfactorily pummelled the persecutor of the true faith. Admiration for his prowess and courage in a fair fight freed him thenceforward from serious annoyance. Moreover he was a clever and modest boy, with a marked ability for declama-

tion, an accomplishment highly thought of in those days, when the Webster tradition was still flourishing. He was invited to private houses and to public and social gatherings, to aid in entertaining the company. A favorite subject was Emmet's speech to his judges, which the audiences, forgetful of their bad treatment of Emmet's compatriots, always received with enthusiasm. A suspicion that plans had been laid to weaken the faith of his children induced Mr. Mullany to send his boys to the academy then in charge of the Christian Brothers in Utica. However, the natural amiability of the natives in time got the better of racial and religious animosities, and the boys kept up friendly relations with their schoolmates, accepting invitations to declaim, and establishing with them intimacies which continued pleasantly for many years.

In fact the Irish were secretly popular with the sedate and somewhat gloomy natives, who had a fine sense of rollicking humor long kept in check by Puritan rigidity. The irrepressible fun of the Irish strongly appealed to them, the fine social customs of the immigrant also attracted the younger generation, and Irish hospitality, so utterly unlike anything practised in the United States, made a deep impression. Mr. Mullany, as well as many of the elders of that day, had a grain of the Puritan strictness in his nature. Living on his farm outside the village, he ruled his family of two sons and three daughters with traditional correctness, the more severe that he was under the eyes of hostile critics. His wife was the gentlest of women, the most faithful of mothers, who cared for nothing beyond her household, the church,

and the school. Leisure hours were devoted to such family pleasures as were then more popular than at present. Reading was a favorite pastime. The characters and habits of such a group of Christians could not fail to win the esteem of the hypercritical neighbors, with whom intercourse was marked by a dignified reserve and courtesy. These checked the scornful patronizing over the mere Irish, in which the native was inclined to indulge; and the church was able to secure, from a home training so favorable to lofty vocations, three members of the family for its service, a daughter entering a religious community and a son becoming a priest in the diocese of Syracuse. There was nothing rigid in the family life, however. Human nature flourished there cheerfully as in less religious homes, and the mischievous boys gave the parents sufficient exercise for their duties of supervision. It was useless for them to ask such favors as attending evening parties, for the father would not consent to any scheme which took his children from home in the evening. Therefore on one occasion the two boys, after retiring decorously to bed, with their mother's permission stole from the house, and took horse and carriage to attend a social at the house of a friend. To avoid discovery, a staid old cow was put in the horse's stall wrapped in the usual blanket, for it was the father's custom to make a careful survey of the premises before closing up for the night. The trick was successful. The old man had finished his tour of inspection and was just closing the barn-door, when the cow, worried and indignant over the strange stall and the unusual blanket, turned her head in his direction and raised her voice

in loud protest. Naturally there was a stormy time of it for the rest of the evening, and father was waiting for explanations when the boys at last returned home.

Life was very pleasant among the exiles and their children forty years ago in the pleasant valleys of New England and New York. Though the victims of misrule at home, driven out in poverty from their native soil by British cruelty, persecuted in their new home by the people whom they loved, given only a half chance for a career, they never lost the fine vitality and good humor of the race, brushed aside hate and scorn with rollicking spirits, and sent down into the new land permanent roots, too deep for English hatred and American persecution to reach. Suffering left its mark, however, and the fact must not be overlooked. The intense faith of the exiles and their children, its splendid energy displayed in every walk of life, and especially in the growth of religious organization, are not more remarkable than their deep-seated dislike of the English name. Every Catholic child who went to school in the decades from 1840 to 1870 was forced, by the petty persecution of scholars and teachers, to ask of its parents such questions as: Why is it shameful to be Irish, or disgraceful to be Catholic? The answers were not complimentary to Protestantism, nor to British injustice, arrogance, and falsehood. Remote from their native land, the first immigrants might easily have forgotten the miseries of the old country in the prosperity of the new, while their children might have altogether ignored the cradle of the race; but the persecution of the sects and the tremendous current of falsehood



turned against all things Irish by English journalists, historians, missionaries, and state officials, and pushed through every channel which English influence could open and use, were forces that could not be overlooked or avoided. They built up, fortunately, what they intended to pull down. That compact body of English-speaking Catholics which forms so clear and distinct an element in the United States, and in all the British colonies, whose front is harder than brass to heresy and England, whose aggressiveness is fiercer than British acquisitiveness, owes its strength in part to the determined efforts of American sects and English politicians to destroy the faith and absorb the race into the English and Protestant household. The children suffered from these efforts, and in consequence they were early awakened by their enemies to the important distinctions of race and religion. Hence it is not surprising to find in Brother Azarias an intensely national Irish spirit, and a deep hostility to political things English. It was his American as well as his Irish birthright, and it is mentioned here in order that readers may comprehend the character of the influences which shaped his growth; also that intelligent Englishmen may learn how the injustices of the past may reach very far into the present, and why the Catholic Irish of the United States hold their race and government in special hatred.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHURCH SCHOOL.

AFTER a short term at the union school in Deerfield, short because of matters mentioned in the preceding chapter, the Mullany boys were old enough to make the three-mile journey to the Brothers' school in Utica, whither they were sent for the remainder of their school days. The proselytizing spirit had much to do with driving Catholic children out of the state schools, and with founding a system of church schools. When observant Protestants began to see the dimensions of the Irish exodus to America, to measure its meanings, and to foresee the establishment of the Catholic faith here, they turned to the schools as the most convenient engine for converting Catholic immigration into Protestant profit. Perhaps a certain success might have attended their efforts, had they one drop of human sympathy for the Irish. They rather despised the race which had been their friend from the beginning, had publicly spoken for them in Europe, and sent them greetings and fighters in Revolutionary days, and had rejoiced greatly over their success against England. These sentimental favors were ignored through prejudice against the religious faith of Ireland. Moreover, the English tradition of Celtic inferiority was strong among the natives, and the Celt's perversion was be-

gun in the spirit of contempt. Persuasion cast aside, the Catholic child was loftily forced to read the Protestant Testament in school, to join in prayer, to study books venomous with rabid insults to his race and his faith, to listen to most offensive diatribes from ministers and teachers, and to suffer meaner torments from his bigoted schoolmates. The natural result was the speedy building up of a system of church schools, and the isolation of the incoming race in fact and sympathy from native influence. The native-born children of the Irish were henceforth classed as Irish by the natives, as aliens pure and simple; a blunder still popular, which has led to another still more curious: the classifying of all American Catholics who speak the vernacular as Irish, without regard to the facts.

The treatment received by the Catholic children in the state schools had far-reaching consequences. The state school of that day was a different affair from the school of our time. It was a distinctly Protestant institution, whose influences were all in favor of the heresy of the time. Its text-books spoke indecently of the Scarlet Woman and the mythical popes, and had tremendous emotions for such names as "bluff King Harry," "good Queen Bess, the virgin queen," and "Bloody Mary." But its success was not marked and its existence was slipshod. War was made upon it almost at the same moment from opposing quarters. Bishop Hughes of New York attacked it for its employment of the public money to teach the doctrines of the sects, while a group of Boston doctrinaires, among whom Brownson had been prominent, sought to use it as a lever against Christianity. The aim of the bishop

was to secure a recognition of the principle that education should be Christian; the aim of the doctrinaires was to banish all trace of Christ from the training of the child. This aim succeeded rather than the other. Discovering that they could not use the public school to spread Protestant doctrines, and determined that no principle should be recognized which would provide church schools with state aid, the sects made common cause with the doctrinaires, and converted the public-school system into a bureau of colorless information, as it can be aptly characterized at this moment. The politicians riveted conditions with all speed, having previously had a hard time of it between the sects, the doctrinaires, and the indignant Catholic bishops; and since the close of the war our popular system of education has hobbled along at the mercy of the doctrinaires, teaching all things except the one thing necessary, timorous to mention the name of God.

The church school in Utica, to which the Mullany brothers were sent, was of sound reputation. It had been built by an apostolic man, Francis McFarland, afterward Bishop of Hartford, for a Catholic community which even at that date was distinguished for its commercial success and its culture. Its members had settled early in the district, and had improved all opportunities. They promptly resented the treatment given their children in the public schools, withdrew them altogether, and founded a school which became celebrated in its day. All the Catholic children attended it, and the common spectacle of other districts, where the rich avoided the church school, was not then seen in Utica. Though

it began as a pay-school, it was soon made free to all comers without any loss of prestige. Its teachers were the Brothers of the Christian schools, of whom more will be said in later chapters, and the immediate director was Brother Justin, at present the superior of the New York district, a man of much mental and physical vigor, a successful teacher, thoroughly versed in boy-nature, well acquainted with his times, of great ingenuity and sound administrative abilities, and now widely esteemed after a teaching career extending over half a century. His society, and in fact all the teaching societies, were then in demand for the building up of the system of church schools. They provided trained teachers and worked for little more than their mere support. The parishes of that time were lacking in money and means to provide lay teachers. The Christian Brother worked anywhere, under the most puzzling conditions, for charity's sake. He taught only the English branches, as the object of his society and the intention of its saintly founder urged him to look more to the ordinary needs of the mass of pupils, and less to the higher branches of learning. His rule did not forbid the teaching of these branches, and under given circumstances he was free to attempt greater things for the sake of his pupils. Without these teaching societies the gigantic task of building up a system of church schools would have been impossible; even with them, it remains a serious labor. Nevertheless, having struck the true note in the school training of the child, at a time when the American sects had basely deserted the Christian idea in primary education for the passing pleasure of flouting the Catholics, the Catholic body

in America has never failed to sound it in each decade since the war.

For this reason the best non-Catholics of Utica were interested in the church school. There has always existed a strong minority of Protestant believers who have never surrendered to the principle of Godless education, and who have kept their children from the colorless schools. These people have always been the admirers of the Catholic school, and have given it their countenance. The Brothers invited them in Utica to inspect their work and their methods on occasions. The principal of the high school was a frequent visitor and sincere admirer and student of the Brothers' system. Business men were invited to examine a class when it had acquired a certain proficiency. The cashier of a bank, a railroad manager, a merchant, subjected the boys to various tests of knowledge and skill. In return Brother Justin was invited to exercises at the public schools. Thus the educators of the town became acquainted with one another, and a discussion arose, even in that early time, about getting state aid for the church schools, cramped in their good work for lack of means. The severity of the work had led many to maintain that two things were an impossibility in this century: a good school for boys, and the development of a native clergy. Time has shown the foolishness of both contentions, and at that time the Utica school had cast a doubt on the first. The Brothers had won the goodwill of the less prejudiced natives, had made them see how significant was true Christian training, had convinced them that a Catholic monk was a human being and could teach boys with great success. The



pupils of the Utica school, for the most part, were an honor to their training. The worst that could be said of the failures rarely included the loss of the faith. The successful were Catholic in all circumstances, however commonplace may have been their practice of the faith. The next generation of Utican Catholics, while marked with the faults of the period, carried with them everywhere a pride of faith, which made apostasy a family dishonor, a social blunder, as well as a crime against Christ.

In this excellent school young Patrick Mullany distinguished himself as its cleverest pupil. He was a boy who loved books, who read much and well, and who thought deeply. He was a sturdy boy physically, and could hold his own in a school-boy fight, while neither courting nor avoiding these Homeric battles. All through life he maintained an unusual reserve of manner and delicacy of feeling, which concealed a deep sensitiveness. In the school contests, where one set of boys was matched against another in particular studies, and days were fixed when the boys lined up for a supreme test, the last to fall, and he rarely fell, was Patrick; yet a single failure to answer a question, like a mortal wound in battle, put an end to the soldier's career. Many pleasant devices had the Brothers to keep youthful minds under the discipline of faithful study. One of them was military in its scheme: the class was divided into two camps, with officers and other engaging features. In each study the two camps were contestants, and the reward of victory was a national flag, bearing in gilt letters the legend, "Victory." At the close of each month the marks gained by each division

were counted, a general contest was held to test the sum of knowledge gained by the best men on either side, and the winners were then presented with the flag, permitted to march in procession around the school while the defeated looked on, and allowed to retain the flag in their part of the school until their opponents wrested it from them later by superior scholarship. In those days the professions were not often sought by the children of the immigrant, most of whom went to work at the age of fourteen, while very few went to the colleges. The Brothers taught the boys the useful things of their future career, the main effort being to fit them mentally and spiritually for the business world of that day. The state schools left the spiritual training entirely to the home and Sunday-school. The Catholic leaders never anywhere surrendered the education of the child's soul to the mere catechism teachers. Therefore the curriculum required that the history and the doctrines of the faith should be taught, and that the children should be practised in the ordinary duties of their religion.

In all the branches taught by the Brothers Patrick Mullany won high praise for his thoroughness. He was an all-round student. In particular his powers of declamation were admired. He had a strong, sweet, flexible voice, which many sicknesses afterward weakened; his ruddy cheeks, good figure, clear eyes, and manly manner gave him a pleasant and sturdy appearance; his frequent public appearances as a representative pupil of the school made him well known in Utica; and his success in facing the ordeal of a public examination for any study brought him a

good share of school-day popularity. His old teacher of that period, Brother Justin, pronounced him the cleverest student he had ever taught in his long career. He was a quiet boy, reticent to the point of shyness, but of a determined and independent spirit—a spirit peculiar to the Irish immigrant of the period, all the more aggressive, perhaps, because of his poverty and the plenitude of native scorn. In fact the exiles rather despised the native for his lack of personal acquaintance with foreign countries. I remember one old gentleman who ridiculed the pretensions of the leading elder in the town, a man of wealth and culture, and a graduate of Yale. “Sure, he never thravelled,” was his withering comment, he himself mindful of his own journey to America by way of England, Canada, and a coast voyage to Boston. “The differ betwixt him an’ me,” said he to an inquiring grandson, “is that he never thravelled, never saw a counthry but his own, little o’ that, an’ not very well, bedad. While your grandad thravelled, me boy.” And to the same inquiring boy, who asked shrewdly why the Irish were not as rich as the Yankees, he replied earnestly and wittily: “We’re richer, me son, but we give away more,” an economic fact, for the native of that time was very parsimonious.

Patrick’s home surroundings were very favorable to his proper mental and spiritual development. His mother was a model housewife, whose home and family were the one engrossing object of her daily existence. The farm and house were of comfortable dimensions, and enabled her to dispense hospitality with true Irish fervor and profusion. It was her greatest pride that the clergy and the religious of

the neighborhood found her family circle congenial to their tastes, and favored her with their company as often as they could. The summer vacations brought a constant stream of clerical visitors, priests, brothers, students, and nuns, to receive whom worthily and entertain honorably kept her busy through the entire spring season in the matters of preparation. Her husband was a superior man, of a deeply religious nature, well-read and well-informed. He came of a family, as has already been said, well-to-do in Ireland, and still prominent there for its prosperity and refinement; and he left his native land chiefly because his impulsive disposition and patriotic feeling had entangled him in the national movements of the time. His career at home was practically spoiled, and his only hope lay in a new land. His nearest neighbor in Deerfield was Horatio Seymour, with whom for many years he held relations quite worthy the attention of writers who desire to show the effect of the Irish exodus on American thought. English students and statesmen in particular, who are often puzzled at the startling power exercised by the Irish upon American politics at critical moments, could learn more in an analysis of Mullany's relations with the leader of the Democratic party than in poring over many academic volumes.

Consider the two men. One was an exile from a land where real government had rarely existed since the English invasion. He had fled from its shores because with all his intelligence, virtue, and industry he could not find the means to make an honorable living and retain his self-respect. Bitter hate was the feeling which filled his heart against the nation whose

representatives enacted the laws and nursed the conditions which made him an exile. His brethren had died in the field fighting those laws. He himself had settled in the one land of the world which had inflicted loss and humiliation upon England. It can be surmised with what energy of denunciation this warm-hearted exile described for his neighbors the difference between English government of his native land and American conditions. On the other hand, Horatio Seymour was then slowly rising to fame as a statesman of superior discernment. Later he was to be the governor of New York State during the Civil War, the leader of his party, and its candidate for President in opposition to so formidable an antagonist as General Grant. For years his influence was dominant in the councils of the Democratic party, which had gathered in the immigrants as soon as naturalized, and had made the Irish vote a political fact. Seymour had the prejudices of his time and creed against the Catholic Irish, but his generous heart and political shrewdness kept them in check. Moreover, for ten years previous to reaching the meridian of his power he had Mr. Mullany for his neighbor, the one man in his world who could provide him with the key to many mysteries of Irish character and of English rule in Ireland. The exile undoubtedly had it in his power to make some return to the great enemy of his nation, and took supreme advantage of it. He discussed again and again with Seymour the phases of the Irish question as it existed both in Ireland and in America, and also the probable neutrality of England in the threatening war with the South. The results of their intercourse may be gathered from the facts. Sey-

mour as a party man, a state official, and a private citizen was always the firm friend of the Irish, not merely in the negative fashion of saying nothing against them, but in a positive way by doing much to attach them to the Democratic party, by shaping the policy of that party to their needs, and by taking a lively interest in the best method to locate them favorably in the country. More than once he used Mr. Mullany's views in his speeches, and was gratified to see his neighbor's prophecy concerning England fulfilled: that in her great dislike of the United States she would favor the cause of the slave power of the South, in the hope of seeing the Union shattered into fragments. It was men like Mr. Mullany that taught the leaders respect for the immigrant and his faith at a time when both were thought strange and even monstrous. It was leaders like Seymour, whose foresight and kindness, quite as much as the hostility of other partisan chiefs drove them from other parties, made the Irish the devoted adherents of the Democratic party for over half a century.,

Another leader with whom the Mullanys had close acquaintance was Senator Roscoe Conkling, an eminent member of the Republican party, and a brother-in-law of Seymour. In his early days he was quite bitter against all things Catholic and Irish, and upon one occasion delivered an offensive diatribe against the nuns of a certain neighborhood. On the next night, in the same hall and before practically the same audience, Governor Seymour took him to task for his bitterness and paid the nuns a just and glowing tribute. Conkling lost his prejudice with time, and was ever the kindly friend and generous adviser of the family.



Such friends as these indicate the standing acquired by the Catholic colony at Utica, and the esteem in which the Mullanys were held. In fact Utica Catholics early acquired a polish which did not reach less fortunate districts until years after the Civil War. They had representatives in every walk of society, many of whom rose to distinction. In particular the Kernan family saw its head win senatorial honors, after the prejudices of his fellow-citizens had denied him the governorship of the State. A few amassed large fortunes in business, and others achieved success in law and medicine; so quickly did the children of the exodus take advantage of the opportunities offered to industry and manhood in the United States.

The influences which raised the Utica colony to eminence were the same which directed the life of Patrick Mullany during the five years he was an inmate of his father's house. They moulded the lives of many happy children of that neighborhood. Not even the natives enjoyed advantages so rich and plentiful. The Catholic home, whether rich or poor, guarded perfectly the innocence and purity of the children. Parents, sprung from a race that loved chastity with the fierceness of the primitive Christians, were sleepless in their watch against a vice too common in the new country. When the little ones left home for the school, they were transferred to the care of holy men and women who taught out of a perfect love for mankind. The church and its priest stood like a garrisoned fortress on guard over all spiritual interests. The happy people were lavish of their love for the nation which had given them so much happiness. Unfortunately their love was re-

jected with contempt and indifference. They were regarded as aliens then and many a decade since, and shut off in consequence from a proper share in social and political life—afflictions which they bore in proud patience until the day of reckoning came, the era of the rebellion, when Northern generals were only too glad to receive the Irish legions as a makeweight for the English gold flowing into the South. Such were the circumstances which surrounded Patrick Mullany in his school days. Little they disturbed him, busy with his beloved books. The day was not long enough to satisfy his thirst for knowledge, nor the early night added to it. He must sit up till the last flicker of the secret candle put an end to study. Three years he spent at the Brothers' school. His abilities, and such friends as Seymour and Conkling, gave him a clear course in a professional career. It was a surprise to his non-Catholic friends that he chose instead the mysterious life of the teaching monk.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ~~A~~ MONK'S TRAINING.

THE boy was not long in the care of the Brothers when his vocation for the religious state took form, and was made known to his teachers and to some of his friends. The latter hardly received the news with enthusiasm. The society of the Brothers was little known at that time in the English-speaking world, and not at all understood. Sisterhoods were familiar to the Irish, but brotherhoods were regarded with doubt. Their work was appreciated of course, but gave rise to the inevitable query, Why are not these men priests? The Irish mind, so accustomed to its famous priesthood, attached in love and admiration to its members, could not understand how any man, willing to take up the obligations of the religious state, could stop short at the humble brotherhood, when the dignity and the advantages of the altar lay but a step beyond. The priest's life was spent in the open, as a leader, surrounded by the world's respect and honors: the teaching brother seemed to live like a soldier in barracks, leading a laborious life, without honor or emolument. Patrick Mullany hesitated as he thought of these things, before breaking the news to his parents. To tell them that he wished to become a priest would have filled their hearts with that joy which only the heart of the Catholic parent



DE LA SALLE ACADEMY, NEW YORK  
*The Old Novitiate*



can know; he would still belong to them in part, dependent on them for his college training, returning home in the vacations up to the moment of ordination, living in the same state with them, and ever free to bless them with his aid and his presence. As a Brother of the Christian schools he would leave his home forever, never to have any part in it more, except through his love and remembrance, and its devotion to him.

These thoughts gave pause to his ambition, and helped him to weigh well his own motives, to examine that call which he had received, and to make certain of his election to a noble but severe profession. He was only a lad of fourteen, and experienced men smile at the notion of such an infant discussing with himself his own fitness for the impossible, or weighing his own motives, or dreaming that God had called him in the night to strangely higher things. Yet this phenomenon is not rare in the Christian family. The vocation to the priesthood, to the convent, to the monastery knows no rules of manifestation. John was called in his youthful innocence, John the Baptist sanctified in the womb, Peter taken away from his nets in his manly prime, Matthew invited to abandon in middle age his office in the receipt of customs. The children are as likely to receive the call as the older youths. To many it comes on the day of the first communion with the first touch of the sweet body of Christ; to others it comes in the shape of a sudden thought, like the flash of blinding lightning, of the importance of life, and of getting the most out of it; not a few find it awaiting them in their first serious meditations on death, or the vanity of the earthly



prizes they covet; a chance meeting with a priest, a religious, a suggestive book, ignites the flames of vocation in the souls of some; while others still have it from their mother's womb, and grow up with a beautiful fascination for the things of God. The little boy makes his own vestments and his own altar, or a monk's gown and hood and cincture. The little girl has her coif and gamp and veil of the nun. In purely Catholic countries these things are noted and provided for, and the children with mysterious tastes of this kind find in the shops the toys which suit their reverent natures. Whatever shape the vocation takes in its coming, its light is quickly recognized in the household. Life is no longer the same for the child of predilection. He is found on his knees in the secret places of the house, the sanctuary and its Divine Presence have an irresistible charm for him, his mood is more serious and reserved, a hidden current of thought and resolution shapes his entire life. He imagines that all this is known only to himself and God. He is ignorant that the fond eyes, which have noted every change in him from his infancy, are watching him now as never before, are veiling from him the light which a trembling hope has lit in them. Father and mother pretend to see nothing, yet see all, remove obstacles from his path, feed him with unsuspected hope and courage, and await discreetly the hour when the secret will be revealed to them.

God has not withheld this call from the noble spirits of the world in any age or nation. The great minds of history have received and recognized it, the great teachers and legislators of the nations have followed its light as they could; and in proportion as

they were faithful to its guidance their works were wondrous and enduring. I recall the amazement with which I saw one of its manifestations in a Protestant household, where the boy of ten made a lectern for himself, placed a Bible on it, read a chapter to his hearers very gravely, and preached a simple discourse of ten minutes with the deepest seriousness. It was not merely a childish fancy for imitation, but a deep and sincere passion for the spiritual in his life. To the Catholic child a vocation to the higher life necessarily takes on a more serious form than to any other. For the latter nothing is changed in externals. His vocation, whatever it may be, can be followed without leaving the beaten paths of life. He will remain at home, associate with his fellows on the common terms, love, marry, and beget his children like other men, do his work for his sect, or his science, or his people on well-known lines, and never carry any other cross than the average. The life of the Catholic priest is a life apart in its ideals, and its cadets no sooner feel the heat of vocation than the love of purity and chastity is redoubled in their hearts, they accept the isolation of the senses as honestly as their isolation from their fellows. Christ demands from them a perfect likeness to Himself in their abandonment of personal freedom and in their devotion to the people, and they surrender themselves absolutely to Him. For the monk and the nun self-abnegation must go still further, since to their community must belong every moment of their time, all fruits of their labors, they having nothing to be called their own. These details present themselves in turn to the mind of the Catholic child, as fast as the world presents him with

its knowledge, its seductions, and its temptations, from which he turns with innocent but unconscious scorn.

Young Mullany felt drawn to the life of study, teaching, and retirement from the world, which is peculiar to the Christian Brother. He was fond of study, and his piety was of the deepest kind. In all matters, as his after-life amply proved, he had the habit of going to the roots of things. His home was often visited by the neighboring priests, and their acquaintance gave him proper opportunity to compare the life to which his heart inclined him with the sacerdotal career. He knew a choice of entrance into the priesthood would be more agreeable to his relatives, but the natural inclination and the call seemed lacking. Therefore he adhered to his first idea, and turned his thoughts entirely to the teaching life. There was dismay in his home when the facts were made known to the father and mother. All the parties interested had a share in breaking the news and in smoothing the way for the boy's departure. Brother Justin accepted him for his institute, and the parish priest expressed his concurrence and his satisfaction. Many tears were shed and many prayers uttered; but all ended in the departure of the youth, not yet at the close of his fifteenth year, for the novitiate of the Christian Brothers in the city of New York. It was the first break in the family circle, and was followed in later years by the entrance of his sister into the order of St. Vincent de Paul, and by the ordination of his only brother to the diocesan priesthood. Only once did his parents seem to regret their consent to his departure from home, when his mother, in a fit

of loneliness, went down to New York bent on bringing him back, and was soothed into resignation before her visit was ended. She found him happy, healthy, enthusiastic. The novitiate was a small building on East Second street, which lodged fifty aspirants for the honors of the Christian teacher. They were rather crowded, had no private grounds whatever, and were forced to take their exercise in the public parks; but a merrier or a more satisfied group of boys could nowhere be found. Under a careful and considerate director, they were walking in the paths of perfection with the cheerfulness of well-fed and well-ruled youth. The good mother had not the heart to disturb the comfort of her son.

At that time, in the year 1862, the Brothers had few members in this country, few institutions, small influence, and slight acquaintances among Catholics, who looked upon them rather as a curiosity than as the embodiment of a useful and practical idea in the training of the young men. Their community was of French origin. It had found a home in Canada first, and thence branched out into the United States, making its earliest foundation in the city of Baltimore about 1848. In fifty years its membership has increased from two to one thousand, and its care is extended to many varieties of youthful training, from the parochial school to the college, from the reformatory to the high-class technical school. The founder, John Baptist de La Salle, has of late years become well known to the historians of education as a man of original character and of sound practical sense, to whom must be ascribed the invention of some of the best ideas in modern methods of education. Catholics

look upon him as a saint, and he has recently been elevated to the honors of beatification by the Church. He was a priest of the diocese of Rouen, France, who took a deep interest in the education of the young. Finding the schools and methods which trained the children of the poor anything but fitted for the producing of the best results, he organized a body of teachers, spent all his fortune in training them, and in establishing schools, and gave up his whole life to the development of a successful system for educating the young workmen of the French nation. He was the first prominent educator to supplant the Latin with the vernacular in the common schools, where, up to his time, Latin was the principal tongue. He was the introducer of what is called the simultaneous method in education; which is the modern fashion of grouping children in classes according to progress, and teaching thirty at a time. Simple and natural as is the method, the schoolmasters had not thought of any other than teaching each child separately, until the priest of Rouen adopted the class-system for his schools. Finding the well-to-do properly supplied with good schools for their children, he devoted himself to the children of the working people. His teachers were prepared, in the normal schools which he founded for them, for the teaching of the practical branches of study, such as would serve the workman of that day in his simple career. Feeling that this regard for the workers would be always a prime necessity of the times, he urged his teachers for the time to avoid schools whose course of studies was of the sort desired by the wealthy for their children; but this idea did not enter into the constitution of his

institute, lest it might hamper the free action of the superiors in later times.

Although he began his work without other thought than that of doing his utmost for the children of his day, in time the notion of a community of laymen, bound by simple vows, living in community, and utterly devoted to the training of boys for a practical Christian life, took possession of him. It was not the perpetuation of his ideas and methods alone that urged him to the laborious and dubious work of founding a new religious community. The saints have little ambition for a task so huge and thankless. But De La Salle's views had widened the more closely he came into contact with the people, the more deeply he studied their needs and the means of supplying them in the matter of education. His keen mind missed no point of the whole process in the training of the child. His theory of education was founded on the doctrines of his faith and the actual conditions in France. He was of the opinion that beings with an immortal destiny, which may be wrecked through carelessness, are worthy of the finest efforts on the part of their teachers, out of whose sight should never go the fact that their pupils have immortal souls. He held that the teacher, the school, the method, and the text-book should all be of that same high character which men demand of the parents of children, the home, and its teachings. As the child has a living to earn, he must be prepared for that serious work; as he has a soul to care for and a heaven to reach, religion and piety should have equal share in his training; as he is a social being, brought into daily contact with his fellows, he must be taught



manners; as a foul nest cannot train a clean bird, the home should therefore be as noble and as clean as God's temples, the parents pious, prudent, and devoted; and as the school is but a substitute for the home, the teacher for the parent, therefore the school should be a second edition of the home. He would have methods of the best, teachers of the best, text-books of the best; and as these things were not to be found among the multitude of teachers in France, at the standard of which he dreamed, like all earnest workers on new lines he had to make his tools and train his workmen before he was enabled to take up the great task which he saw before him. There were innumerable schools and teachers in France at that period, vilifiers of Catholics to the contrary notwithstanding; but each was managed on the ideas of its teachers, the *pédagogie* art was little understood, and the teachers were an irresponsible set, whom even the bishops found it hard to discipline and control. There were many abuses, and no responsible parties to root them out. The need of education was everywhere felt, and the charitable did wonders in providing for the need; but no standard of popular education existed, no models stood up in the market-place for all to see, by which earnest men could measure their own progress in the training of the young.

In these circumstances and upon the principles named above, De La Salle began his work. He had remarkable success. After the usual difficulties and hardships which attend such beginnings he gathered around him a goodly number of young men, eager to live the life of the vows and to teach the young. He trained them for the spiritual life and for the school-

room, and left them a rich legacy of writings on these matters. Before his death in 1719 he had successfully established his community and secured for it the countenance of the bishops and of the King; he had founded a normal school for the benefit of the Brothers, and four for the training of teachers in general, thirty-three primary schools, three practice-schools, attached to the normal schools, a Sunday-school having special courses for the study of commerce and trade, two boarding-schools, and a reformatory, and two schools for technical instruction. When he died he left behind him a reputation for sanctity so great that in our times the Pope has declared him Blessed. For the institute which he founded he prepared before his death a constitution under which it still continues to be governed, and whose great merit is that it withstood the shock of the French Revolution, and all the other shocks to which the strongest of human institutions are liable in the course of two centuries. His disciples have allowed no body of educators to surpass them in enterprise and devotion to the young, and their institute stands a vigorous rebuke to the *laissez-faire* methods of training the young in these times, without serious regard to ethical or religious standards.

It is a noteworthy fact that the Brothers of the Christian Schools made their first foundation in the United States at the moment when the Irish began their exodus to these shores. The great famine of 1848 swelled the once thin stream of emigration from Ireland into the dimensions of a torrent, and flung thousands of unfortunates into American cities. There were not teachers and priests enough for the

multitude at first. Had the Protestants measured their opportunity and received the unfortunate people with a show of affection, there was nothing to hinder a heavy apostasy from our ranks. Statisticians tell us that the losses were heavy as it was; but the cordial dislike and scorn of the American public for the Irish rather strengthened the faith of the simple people, and gave the bishops time to secure priests for the churches and teachers for the schools. The demand for both became at once imperative. It was therefore a fortunate moment in which the Brothers opened their first schools in the diocese of Baltimore. They spread quickly, and had work to do for ten times their number, work of all kinds, regular and irregular, for the tragedies of the Irish exodus were as bitter as the needs and more heartrending. The sudden flinging out of a people from their ancient seats, unprepared, into a new and half-hostile land, is one of those crimes for which this world has no tribunal, no records, no punishment. If God does not in His way avenge it here, there are no penalties. In this case there was no pen to put down the stories of broken hearts, of many misfortunes, of lives disordered, of the young led astray, of the women dishonored, of the children orphaned, of the homes broken up, of the savings spent, of the little ones seized in secret by the proselyte-hunters and shipped to Protestant homes in the West, of the entire train of human sorrows engendered by the one great calamity. Some day the subject will receive proper treatment at the hands of a competent writer, and the book will add another depth to that deep expectation on the part of the Irish in America, that Providence will inflict

upon the callous breeders of so much sorrow every pang which their malicious negligence wrought in those sad days. Our own sorrows alone are able to give us appreciation of the sorrows we inflict upon others, and true penitence for them. The English nation will never understand the crimes of its leaders toward the Irish, will never regret a wrong inflicted on the race which they despise, until they have at least tasted of the cup which they have forced so many helpless peoples to drink to its dregs.

Another notable fact is that the Church in America, through the Brothers and the other teaching communities, took up the cause of religious training of the young at the very moment when circumstances had decided the Christian sects of the country to abandon it. From the earliest times the schools had mingled religious training with mental, and the ministers had a controlling influence in the public institutions; but with the increase of population came the solvents which untruth has to face some time, no matter how firmly it has combined itself with the elements of truth. Faith and virtue, as Christians regard these things, began to lose their hold upon numbers of people. The sects multiplied to an extent which made control of the school system by the more powerful divisions a practical impossibility. In time religious training in the schools came to be no more than the reading of the Scriptures, the saying of the Lord's prayer, and the presence of the local ministers at school celebrations, where Luther was canonized and the Pope damned in the ministerial speeches. The text-books carried the Protestant tradition in its most hideous forms, the teachers were mostly profess-

ing Christians, and with these evidences of sectarian belief on view the leaders were content. Then came the Emerson movement, with its Christian terminology, its materialistic theories, and its professed aim, as Brownson tells the story, of using the public schools to destroy the Christian idea and to popularize its own. Emerson was the strongest anti-Christian, not to say atheistic, force which the times developed; and American literature has produced no other since, equal to him in influence and real strength. The blows he delivered at the public conscience loosened, for this century at least, all but the ties of sentiment, which still bind the multitude to a living Christianity. Their influence was felt in all departments of thought, and shook the last vestige of religious training like a tattered garment from the public schools. The Catholics had a share in this work indirectly. Through their ablest champion, Archbishop Hughes of New York, they fought successfully the continuance of Protestant domination in the public schools, which their taxes helped to support. By degrees the lying text-books were either banished or modified, ministerial prominence on state occasions disappeared, and the schools took on their present colorless condition with regard to religion. In the end, when the sects discovered that religious training of the children would redound as much to the advantage of the Catholics as to their own, while the banishment of Christianity from the schools meant greater harm to the Catholics than to themselves, they became the wildest advocates of the thing called "unsectarianism." As a result the public schools of the Republic would fit as agreeably into the reign of

Augustus, or of Julian the Apostate, or of Attila, or of the Sultan Achmed, as into the times. The condition pleases the politicians and the easy-going Americans whose fathers took at least a sentimental interest in the Son of God, whereas they take none. Brownson describes how the Boston school of Emersonian materialism planned fifty years ago to get hold of the public schools. The result of their efforts proves that no one need despise obscure beginnings. Their wildest fancies hardly embraced the full measure of their success. The mere absence of religious training in the schools has made the public-school system a propagator of indifferentism.

It can be seen how happy and opportune was the arrival of the Brothers in the country. They struck at that moment, in common with the other teaching communities, the one true note in the education of the young, and have kept it sounding ever since to good purpose. For if the supineness and meanness of the leaders deprived the American parent of the best feature, the essential element in the successful training of his children, the people did not thereby altogether lose their heads; and to-day the discerning and thoughtful fathers and mothers send their little ones, if they are able, to the Catholic convents and colleges, or to the "sectarian" schools where religion has full play, sure that some development will be given to the souls of the children. When one perceives the intense determination of the anti-Christian and anti-religious minds among the world's leaders to get rid of Christ and religion, and replace both with a refined naturalism, it seems easier to understand the motives of a man like De La Salle, and to grasp the full merits



of his scheme in the foundation of his Institute. His scheme matches determination with determination, plants the religious school at the very doors of the irreligious, defies comparison, and flings absolute chastity, poverty, and obedience in the face of those who condemn all three as impossible to nature and fatal to happiness as to pleasure. It seems strange to the pagan and Protestant American that his theory can find coadjutors of ability and character at this late date of history; when monachism, to their minds, has been proved an economic blunder and a crime against nature; when the Republic has demonstrated the superior charms of natural freedom! Yet in the United States alone the number of priests, brothers, and sisters must be close to fifty thousand! These thousands rejoice in their condition, not simply because they are religious, preachers and teachers and ministers to the needy, but because they are leading that higher life of utter self-abnegation to which God has called them, and for which their natural gifts and dispositions are adapted. Brother Azarias was an average boy in his natural disposition, ruddy and hearty, with a fine appetite, a gay soul, and a fondness for play as well as books. Yet never was he so happy in his life before as in his novitiate, living by the simple but severe rule of Father De La Salle the Blessed, with just enough to eat and wear, just bed enough to hold him and sleep to rest without satiating him, space enough to move in without trying his neighbors, and as much prayer and study as are good for young ambitions.

The rule of life routed every boy out of bed at half-past four in the morning the year round, kept him in

the chapel at meditation, prayer, spiritual reading, instruction, and self-examination five hours of the day, dictated the use to which each moment of time was to be put for the whole twenty-four hours, and sent him to bed between nine and ten pleasantly wearied. The rules which govern the life of the Christian Brother were planned by the founder, and have received only such emendations as change of circumstances demanded. Their study formed a part of Brother Azarias' training. | This earnest and simple-minded boy of fourteen, fresh from his father's house, learned at the outset that the object of the society which he had joined was the Christian education of youth, to secure which the greater part of his life was to be spent with boys in the classroom, while the other part was to be employed in preparing himself to teach these boys well. His master urged him to acquire with all speed the spirit of the Institute, which is thus described in the rule: "The spirit of this Order is, first, a spirit of faith, which should induce all the members composing it to look upon everything with the eye of faith, to do nothing but with a view to God, and to attribute all to Him. . . . In order to live up to this spirit, the Brothers of the Society shall have a profound respect for the Holy Scriptures; and in testimony thereof they shall always carry the New Testament about them, and pass no day without reading a part of it, through a sentiment of faith, respect, and veneration for the Divine words contained therein, looking upon it as their first and principal rule. . . . They shall attend as much as possible to the holy presence of God, and shall take care to renew the remembrance of it from time to

time, being fully persuaded that they should think only of God and of what He ordains, that is, of their duty and employment. . . . Secondly, the spirit of the Institute consists in an ardent zeal for the instruction of youth, in bringing them up in the fear of God, in teaching them how to preserve their innocence, if they have not lost it, and in inspiring them with a great aversion and horror for sin, and for whatever might expose them to lose their innocence. To be animated by this spirit, they shall earnestly strive, by prayer, instruction, vigilance, and good conduct in school, to procure the salvation of the children confided to their care, educating them in a Christian spirit, and inspiring them with sentiments of piety, according to the rules and maxims of the Holy Gospel." The training of the novitiate was based on these simple but heart-stirring principles. And as the lad was to take in time the simple vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, and also vows to adhere to the Institute and to teach the poor gratuitously, he was taught at the proper time their nature and the dispositions required, though the taking of vows did not concern the novice, who was left free until time and experience had ripened his convictions. Not until he had completed his eighteenth year and suffered a probation of two years was a novice allowed to take the vows, and then only for one year.

On the subject of the vows the rule gave him this information, which was supplemented by the instruction of the novice-master: "The vow of poverty, being a promise made to God never to possess anything in particular, obliges those who make it to a personal

renouncement of all earthly goods. It consequently follows, in virtue of this vow, that those who have made it can neither receive nor take anything whatever, whether to keep, or to use, or to dispose of in any manner whatever, without the Superior's permission. The vow of chastity obliges all who make it to a total renouncement of all carnal pleasures, and to abstain from all that is contrary to chastity in thought, affection, word, and deed. The vow of obedience obliges all who make it to obey" the immediate superiors and the general government of the Institute. In order that the particular application of his vows might be clearly understood the rule further informed the novice on these matters. A Brother is not to possess anything in particular, but all things must be common in each house, even to the clothing and other personal necessities. The local superior can dispose of their garments as he thinks fit. For himself each Brother was allowed the use of a New Testament, an Imitation of Christ, a rosary with crucifix attached, and a small pocket-book. While teaching he is permitted the use of the necessities of the teacher. He is not allowed to borrow or lend, or use anything without permission, to take anything from one house to another except as permitted, to wear no clothing other than the rule calls for, to bear marks of poverty in his clothing. If he have any property upon entering the order, he must dispose of it either to his natural heirs or to the society; and he must live in and upon the community, using no revenue whatever for his own. Equally minute directions are laid down as to the virtues of chastity and obedience. Such was the spirit and such the rules by which the young

novice was prepared in his novitiate for the life to which he aspired. It is a singular and beautiful thing that the more the true monk sees of the world and its standards and methods, as the modern monk's habits of life enable him to see them, the more satisfied he becomes with the holy limits of his condition; and his plain garments, his strict obedience, and chastity give him a natural no less than a spiritual pleasure, as he gazes upon the heart-sickness of the millions enslaved by their appetites.

Community life is the strength of the religious societies, and to the eyes of outsiders one of its severest crosses. The rule requires the Christian Brother to live in community all his life long, until age or infirmity demands privacy for him. The members have the refectory, the recreation-hall, the dormitory, the study-room in common. Only in the classroom are they really alone, or in the hours of sickness. The novices found this life rather pleasant than otherwise, although in the first days of the novitiate in New York City fifty of them were living in small space. Boys love to go and to live in a crowd like sheep, and seem to thrive the better for the multitudinous companionship of their own kind; and this liking survives the innumerable battles and minor squabbles born of narrow and irritating quarters. The rules which they studied provided minute directions as to their loving treatment of their fellows, and the respect due to superiors. It was not, therefore, a work of difficulty to manage fifty young fellows of such high purpose, though crowded in their lodgings. From getting out of bed to getting back to it, every moment of the day was spent in the study of their vocation

and the training and examination of their souls, to make sure of the spirit within. There was no time for superfluities. The hours of recreation were no more than enough for providing the salt of labor. In recreation, as elsewhere, the rules of their founder called for the highest discretion in action and speech. No one was to speak until, all having assembled in the hall and saluted the superior, the signal for speech was given. They were forbidden to mention the affairs of the Institute, or of their particular house, or of their brethren, unless to say pleasant and edifying things; to speak of themselves or their works or their relatives; to mimic or ridicule others, or to contradict their superiors; to be too curious or too forward or too loquacious; } "but they shall converse on edifying subjects, calculated to excite them to the love of God and the practice of virtue." They were advised to avoid melancholy in speech or appearance, so as not to depress their brethren or annoy them, but to cultivate a cheerful mood. They were warned against levity, against unseemly gestures, and equally against loud talking and painful silence. "They shall in all things govern their conduct according to the rules of modesty, particularly in their looks, not lightly looking from side to side, not making signs to the Brothers, and when walking not walking too fast."

In addition to the rules for the development of the interior life and the government of the external man, the novices were trained to the practice of mortification and of humiliation. A life which is already all mortification from its root to its flower would not seem to have room for special mortifications. Yet so



is human nature constituted that, when its ideals are lofty, its endurance seems inexhaustible. The Arctic or African explorer is without content while a foot of ground remains to be covered or a field of ice is left unslipped on by human foot. I heard an experienced Trappist monk say once, in answer to the question, Are you monks satisfied with having brought nature to the very limits of her endurance? "I am certain, not. Although experience has proved that nature can get along and no more with the quantity of food, sleep, labor, and recreation enjoyed by the Trappist monk, yet it seems to us that we might venture on further austerities."

The training in the novitiate lasts one year. It has been preceded by a certain time in the preparatory department, if the novice has not completed the ordinary course of studies suited to his years. The effect of the rigorous training on the young can hardly be imagined by the unsympathetic outsider. The youth of our secular colleges are a handsome crowd to see at their gatherings, but youthful animality is the prevailing tone of these fresh and candid faces, in which shines no light born of innocence or restraint. The well-trained and well-disciplined Catholic boys of academy or college or workshop plainly indicate the work of grace within them. But if one desires to see expressed in the human face, smile, speech, manner, the charm wrought from high purpose, stern discipline, and exalted living, the novitiate of a religious community, or the playground of a clerical seminary, are the places to go. These young men may be of different temperaments and of varying physique, the coarsely built mingling with the refined, the gentle

with the rough, the silent with the loquacious; but upon all those whom the fires of vocation have heated has fallen a physical charm too fine for language. There is little of the ascetic severity in the novitiate of the Christian Brothers. The boys are well fed, well housed, comfortably clad, and accustomed to air and exercise, as far as the body needs for its development. It is growth of the soul, however, which receives prime attention. Its superior strength and beauty in the unconscious novice give him dignity and spiritual beauty of a marvellous kind.

The great moment in the life of the novice is the hour when his superiors confer upon him the privilege of wearing the dress of the Christian Brother. On the eve of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, June 29th, 1862, Patrick Mullany laid aside forever the habit of a civilian and donned the black robe and white collar of his order. It is a simple dress of coarse material, but no king ever put on the gorgeous robes of his coronation with such joy, such emotion, such seriousness as did he who was henceforth to be known to men only as Brother Azarias. Name and dress were both significant of the entire separation from the world, and utter devotion to God and His little ones, demanded of the Christian Brother by his Institute. The actual ceremony was simple enough. One of the Brothers skilled in the use of scissors and needle cut the plain garments and sewed them up in an afternoon. In the chapel gathered the little household of the novitiate, prayers were said and hymns were sung, and the candidate in his plain robes offered himself to the service of God forever, and to the service of the Institute,

represented by the Brother Director. No feature of the rule devised by De La Salle more clearly shows the temper of his great mind than the simplicity with which his order receives this dedication of a youth to a life so high and so exacting.

## CHAPTER V.

### IN THE CLASSROOM.

BROTHER AZARIAS was hurried in his novitiate owing to the circumstances of the time. The regular course of preparation, novitiate, and scholasticate extends from three to five years, according to the aptness of the candidate. He had made a careful preparation in the Utica school, and so did not suffer delay in entering the novitiate, which lasted but little over eight months. His stay in the scholasticate, or normal school, was correspondingly short, since he had begun to teach in the primary schools by the time he was seventeen. The pressing need of teachers at that period was the excuse for this haste. Certainly, if it can be excused in any case, the excuse is to be found in his, who was so devoted a student, and who so speedily fitted himself for every office in the gift of his superiors. The normal school of the Institute is the most important feature, after the novitiate, of the system of education devised by the Blessed De La Salle. France was full of teachers when he began his work, but most of them self-elected to their positions and self-trained. The lack of the times was not in numbers, but in training; and thus the reformer was forced to establish a training-school for his teachers, that they might be efficient as well as pious and devoted. Hence he has left to his chil-

dren and to science a remarkable method for the development of the true teacher. From the young Brother, just ushered into the primary school, not much was required in the matter of mere learning. For some years his chief business would be the teaching of boys of seven the elements of the vernacular, their prayers, and their little duties. If blessed with capacity beyond the average, and control over the children, he might be advanced shortly to the charge of boys of twelve years, and to more difficult studies, but still within the horizon of his own knowledge. It was rather with the spirit of the teacher, the manager of boys, and the method of teaching what he knew, than with the increasing of knowledge, that the normal school of De La Salle was concerned. His rules are very precise in these two matters, and anticipated by two centuries the reforms of which Americans are so proud in their own system. In the point of religion, which for De La Salle, as for every Catholic educator, was the heart of his system, he is vastly superior to the moderns.

Thus his rules begin with the statement that the teachers of the Institute "shall make it their first and principal care to teach their pupils the morning and the evening prayers; . . . the commandments of God and of the Church, the responses of the Holy Mass, the catechism, the duties of a Christian, and the maxims and practices which Our Lord has given us in the holy gospel. They shall accordingly teach catechism daily for half an hour, for an hour on the eves of holydays, and on Sundays and feasts for an hour and a half. On school days they shall, at the most convenient hour, conduct their pupils to hear

mass in the nearest church. . . . They shall neither receive nor retain in school any pupil who will not assist at catechism on Sundays and festivals, as well as school days." Thus was the pupil-teacher trained in the normal school to make religion the beginning, middle, and end of his training of the young, the one thing upon which he could surely rely to make his pupils what they ought to be. As to his general conduct with regard to the children in his charge, Brother Azarias learned from the rules that the Brothers "shall love all their scholars tenderly, without being familiar with any; they shall not give them anything through particular friendship, but purely for merit, or to encourage them. They shall manifest an equal affection for all their pupils, more even for the poor than for the rich, because they are more particularly charged by their Institute with the former than with the latter. They shall endeavor, by their entire conduct, to be a steadfast example of modesty and of all the other virtues, which they should teach their pupils, and engage them to practise." These precepts are in the rules, but the whole detail of school life is given in a treatise entitled "The Management of Christian Schools." When the young Brother was well grounded in these things, and in the methods of teaching the subjects required for the primary department, he was sent to his labors. Brother Azarias was ever a good student and an eager novice. Very thoroughly he imbibed the principles of De La Salle under his skilful teachers, of whom the best which the Institute has in its ranks are always placed in charge of the novitiate and the scholasticate. He was also a born teacher, ever itching to communicate



to others that which he had just learned, if he thought it worth the telling.

Short as was his time in the training-school, his nature had so quickly absorbed their principles of development for monk and teacher that he became a model of the courtesy and self-command required in the community and the school. Thirty years ago the discipline of any school was conducted on harsher methods than prevail at present, and the first communities of the Brothers, for reasons explained further on, were open to some blame in the matter. The rules of Blessed De La Salle with regard to the correction of pupils are worth quoting as an example of his spirit and genius. "The Brothers shall be persuaded that one of the chief means of establishing good order, and conducting a school properly, is the rarity of punishment; they shall therefore be as attentive and vigilant as possible to prevent the faults which would occasion it. When a pupil has committed a fault, the Brother shall first examine by what means he can most efficaciously inspire him with sorrow for it; if punishment appear necessary he shall select that which he believes best adapted both to the expiation of the fault and to the dispositions of the culprit; and he shall be extremely careful to impose it with great serenity and gravity. . . . Corporal punishment, whether by the hand, foot, pointer, signal, or any other object, is absolutely prohibited in our schools; as it is calculated only to embitter the heart and to inspire servile fear: in a word, to make hypocritical rather than virtuous pupils. . . . These punishments are very improper, full of danger, and entirely opposed to the gentleness

and patience which should characterize a Brother of the Christian Schools." In this point the career of Brother Azarias was spotless. In class as elsewhere he was the gentlest of men. He ran to the other extreme, in fact, and in his earlier years required the close presence, in a neighboring classroom, of a stern disciplinarian, whose mere glance could compose young spirits, to help him in keeping order.

From his novitiate in New York Brother Azarias went to teach in the city of Albany, where the Brothers had charge of many parochial schools, and also of an academy for advanced studies. Cardinal McCloskey, then Bishop of Albany, had introduced them into the old-fashioned capital of the State. It was a curious sight for the staid people of that town in those days to see the Brothers marching from their residence each morning in bands of four or more to the schools, their long robes, white collars, and tall hats conspicuous in the streets. The Republic was falling on parlous days! Brother Azarias was sent to teach in the academy, which enjoyed the aristocratic distinction of being a pay school, and served as a high school for the successful graduates of the parochial schools. Tremendous was the interest which the boys of all these schools took in their own education then. The Brothers had one school pitted against the other in oratory, penmanship, and arithmetic; so that one boy could not meet another without receiving a challenge to mortal combat on the field of knowledge, for the honor of their schools. I recall that I carried a message from the director of our school to another at the farther end of the town. As I stood at the desk awaiting an answer every boy in the room signaled me his

contempt for the intellectual prowess of our school, and also his desire to engage me in battle on the spot. The Brother was petitioned even to make trial of me, and good-humoredly asked me would I dare it; to which I replied—nor would I have ventured back to school with any other reply—that the class had not a man I could not down. There was terrific confusion at this brazen defiance. Only when the Brother reminded them that I was a herald, and entitled to courtesy and free departure, were they content to let me go with black looks and threatenings. This factional spirit was modified properly by the general desire to compete with the pupils of the public schools, who were not permitted by their teachers to admit our existence by so much as entertaining our challenge to intellectual combat. The American people had not yet grown accustomed to the logical results of their own political theories and methods, and could not bring themselves to admit that the children of the Irish were other than foreigners, though we were all born of naturalized citizens on American soil. They were able to assimilate the Englishman, the German, almost any other nationality, and to accord them the privileges of brotherhood, even when Catholics; but for the Irish they carried in their bosoms a peculiar and ineradicable dislike, which has not been overcome even yet, and displays itself yearly in the steady attempt made by New Yorkers of English, or rather of Protestant descent, to deprive their brethren of Catholic and Irish descent from their proper share in the government of the city. Naturally the Irish strain in the native children was more than accented by this conduct, and for many years we looked upon ourselves

as exiles from our native land beyond the sea, and returned Yankee scorn with interest and blows.

It is difficult to account for this everlasting dislike of the Irish, who were the first Europeans to sympathize with the colonies in the days of the Revolution, who admired the Republic to the extreme, and who fought for it in the Civil War with fervor. It may have been that the Americans of English descent resented the invasion of a multitude speaking English, who cursed the Reformation and its authors in witty English, and who assumed a share in political life as soon as they could be naturalized. They may have been disappointed also at the refusal of the Irish and their children to remain in that helot state, which English writers had pleasantly described as their natural condition in presence of superior races. At all events their dislike of all things Irish, out of Ireland, is well known, and accounts for the anomalous state of politics in the large cities.

In the early days, before and during the war, the children bore the brunt of race hatred, and many a nose-blood battle was fought in field and street by the champions of either side, while their elder brothers were fighting and dying together on the bloody fields of the South. Perhaps we were a rude crowd as compared with the gently nurtured and somewhat stupid boys of the other faction. It is certain that we could win from them nine battles out of ten, single-handed or in companies, a fact recorded with mingled pride and regret as a triumph and a humiliation among brethren. Brother Azarias, deep in his studies and class-work, probably had little thought for the small and great wars of the outside world. For some

months he must have sat on Sundays within a few feet of his future biographer, so narrow is our globe, so close at the root are the branching careers and events of this supposedly wide and various world. The Brothers attended the high mass at the Cathedral and sat in the sanctuary screened from view by the pillars of the sanctuary arch; and just in front of them sat the altar boys, *quorum pars magna fui*, roasting amicably in summer and freezing dolorously in winter, for the art of heating great buildings was not yet invented. But we never met. His mind was then bent with the miser's greed of accumulation upon his studies. They must have been numerous, since he was teaching the higher mathematics and astronomy with success by the time he was twenty years old, and had dabbled in French, Latin, Greek, philosophy, and letters under the guidance of the older Brothers, whose business it was to help all aspirants upward, and to fit them for higher duties. The life of the Brother is one of continuous spiritual and mental toil to fit himself by natural degrees for the duties that may devolve upon him. Brother Azarias had no college or university opportunities, but he had the advantage of capable professors, adapted to the training he needed, and of good libraries. Under these men he certainly acquired a fruitful and extensive knowledge, in such a way as to make it useful to others. It did not remain buried in himself, but flowed out upon his classes and into his books graciously. He spent some time in Albany, in Manhattan College, New York, in Philadelphia, where he could scarcely be kept off the roof in his study of astronomy, until he was made professor of mathematics in Rock Hill Col-

lege, near Baltimore, at the age of nineteen. In the few years from the close of his novitiate, he had made rapid advancement in his studies to be able to fill such a professorship; and all the while he had been doing the ordinary work of a teacher in the classroom, which is no light office at any time. In Albany his great friend, Horatio Seymour, was located as governor of the State, and amid his pressing cares found time to receive him and listen with pleasure to the story of his progress and of the strange Institute which he had joined. Americans could not comprehend the spirit which actuated such works of charity. To them it seemed a waste of energies, cutting twigs with axes and shooting hares with cannon. They had no doubt, however, that these men were tremendously in earnest. Their influence over the young, over the parents of children, was large, and their aid to the cause of popular education immense. We boys could have given rare testimony to these things, particularly to the earnestness of the teachers. At this distance it seems to me that I knew nothing of the serious side of religion and of man's nature until I met the vigorous Brother, who could punish without anger, haste, or frown. The training for my first confession convinced me that my life of nine years was beset with sin, and that hell was my natural destination. Dreams of a lurid sort troubled my sleep, and ceased only with the surprise at the gentleness of the priest in the confessional. The day of the first communion was preceded by so many trials of the spirit that it took all the ribbons, medals, and rosettes, all the processions, felicitations, and lunches connected with that happy occasion to bring back normal feeling.



Methods in this respect have changed with the years for the better, but there was no doubt about the impression made upon us by our teachers both in the catechism and in the application of precept and doctrine to child life.

✓ The church schools of that day suffered from many disadvantages, chiefly poverty. Buildings were poor and crowded, lacking ventilation and light, and teachers were poorly paid or not paid at all. But principles and methods were sound and true. The school was really the child's temple. The catechism was well taught, and, supplemented with the other text-books for reading and history after Blessed De La Salle's scheme, with the practical training in special duties, it developed sound Christians, to whom the faith was as their breath. The simple studies of that day, so much neglected now in the mania for decorative studies, were taught to perfection. The Brothers' boys were noted above all the children in the town for their grasp of arithmetic and algebra, their skill in bookkeeping, in penmanship, in spelling, grammar, and English composition, their ability for public speaking, for singing, and above all for their happy assurance in facing an audience either for examination or for entertainment. Out of these humble schools went not the oddities so common at present: boys who can chatter of Darwin and Spencer without being able to compose a respectable letter as to spelling, grammar, and arrangement. The principles and methods of De La Salle fitted America as finely as France of the seventeenth century, and the Brothers owe their success and pre-eminence to their fidelity to his rules of teaching. The letters of Brother

Azarias touching this period of his life are few and unsatisfactory in giving a hint as to his feelings after three years of service in the work of his heart. He was a good correspondent, affectionate, gay, and gossipy on domestic matters in his epistles, but was careful to observe the rules of his state as in his private conversation. The following letter was written in September of 1864, shortly after completing his seventeenth year. The handwriting has the finish of the ambitious teacher of penmanship, and the phraseology betrays the aspiring writer, for the boy had then begun his studies in the art of writing.

BELoved PARENTS:—I beg to be excused for not writing before now. I must say that you are in fault also, for if you had answered my last letter I would have written to you sooner. I assure you it is with the greatest pleasure I write to you, but I wish to receive an answer. I am now in New York and anticipate remaining in it a year. A new academy is opened this year, and I am destined to teach the second class. I send you a catalogue, at the end of which you will find a cut of the building. It is called Manhattan Academy, is five stories high, contains ten classrooms and two parlors in the second and third stories, and the remaining part of the building is for the use of the Brothers. From the diagram and the description I give you of it, you can imagine what a grand house your son is to live in, happier and more content than any man in the great city. Yes, I am secure from every evil, and if any should befall me it would be my own fault. Let me tell you, dear parents, the life of a Brother is a gentlemanly life. You might have been thinking that I was to pass the remainder of my life in Philadelphia, but God has ordained otherwise. I left that city July 17th for New York . . . and went to Manhattan College, where I spent the greater part of

the vacation. The pure air did me a great deal of good. Read the beginning of the catalogue, which contains a beautiful description of the place. Why, the richest of families think it a great thing if they can spend the summer months in some salubrious country location. Then, father, it seems to me you have reason to rejoice at seeing your son faring so well. I hope that John's conduct is edifying, and that he obeys you in everything, which he will surely do if he keeps in mind these words of the Holy Ghost: "Honor your father and mother that you may live long." . . .

Your most affectionate son,  
BROTHER AZARIAS OF THE CROSS.

It is evident that this boy was in love with his life, and had not yet learned to miss the comfort of home in the severe surroundings of community life. Boy-like, he left the catalogue to describe what he did not care to labor over in his letter, and with lofty virtue he reminds his parents of their duty to answer his epistles, and his brother of the words of the Holy Spirit, incorrectly quoted. It is an amusing specimen of youthful priggishness. Brother Azarias of the Cross did not remain long in New York, although he might have thought that he was to spend the remainder of his days in that favored region. In 1866 he was sent to Rock Hill College, in which he was to spend the next two decades and to attain its highest honors. His heart anchored there. It is a pretty spot, a few miles out of Baltimore, a little to the west of the direct road to Washington. The country about is hilly, well wooded, and a savage little stream, the Patapsco, drains it. The college town, like ancient Rome, is built on several hills of vicious steepness,

and its streets wind lazily around their base and crawl comfortably to their summits. The college is on the top of one of these spurs, commands a fine view of the country about, and gets its share of air and light and horizon. It was one of the earliest classical institutions erected by the Christian Brothers after they took up the work of training young men for the professions. Its founder, Brother Aphrates, is still living in a vigorous old age with his community in France. Though a small institution, capable of accommodating over a hundred pupils perhaps, its charming location and fine appointments give it a real distinction. The buildings are of stone. The residence of the Brothers is one of the old mansions, slightly changed for its new purpose, leaving intact the old-time grandeur and stateliness. The campus lies at the rear, well-kept and spacious, most of it artificial, because in that hilly region the hill-summits are narrow. This campus is lined by extra classrooms, and at its remote end stands the gymnasium, rarest of features in our Catholic colleges. This is a one-story building of wood, with wings that serve as reading-room and billiard-room. The main hall is filled with the customary apparatus. For the pleasure of the boys it can be turned into a theatre, with a stage lighted, supplied with beautiful scenery, and generally fitted up after the style of the amateur stage. Thirty feet below the campus is the mountain road, and on the opposite side a field as level as a floor does duty for football and tennis. Farther on an enclosure holds a spacious pond of varying depth, where the boys may bathe in the hot season. The charming country around offers many inducements to the pedestrian or the rider in

its scenery and its people. Baltimore and Washington are not far away. It is an ideal spot for the student and the writer, and so Brother Azarias found it. His stay of twenty years there was the harvest-time of his life. Its peace, its regularity, its labors suited his nature. He plunged into work with ardor, teaching and studying with equal zeal. He was a youth of nineteen when he arrived at Rock Hill, and was able to take charge of the course in astronomy, in analytical mechanics, analytical geometry, and the calculus. His trend at that time was for mathematical science, but within five years philosophy and literature had won him for their own. Not, however, until he had won local distinction for his ability in the drier science.

✓ His life from 1866 to his appointment as president of the college in 1879 was the simple life of a teacher, varied by attacks of sickness, the production of his books, and a visit to Europe. His labors in classroom and study having been carried on without proper regard to his health, he took hemorrhage of the lungs in 1874, and went to spend a part of his vacation, while on the retired list, at home. His old friend, Horatio Seymour, was at that time living on his farm not far from the Mullany homestead, freed from the labors and responsibilities of political life. He had won fame as the governor of the State during the Civil War, and had carried his party's banner in the campaign against the popular hero, General Grant. It was a losing battle, of course, and at its close the defeated candidate withdrew to his farm, and spent the rest of his days as counsellor to the leaders of the Democracy. He was pleased to meet

the young monk again, and encouraged the intimacy which sprang up between them. A superior mind himself, he appreciated the qualities, for him rather novel in their expression, which the son of his old Irish neighbor was displaying, and was highly delighted at the character of that mental culture developed by the teaching community. So interested did he show himself in all that pertained to Catholic matters that Brother Azarias once cherished the hope of seeing him a Catholic before his death, prayed to that end, and got his friends to pray, feeling how worthy of the faith was this large-minded man who had spoken publicly for the Catholic immigrant in times when selfish interest counselled silence. His prayers were not answered, as we know. He ventured to mention his hope and his prayer to Seymour, who thanked him courteously and advised him to continue. During this stay of Brother Azarias at his father's house an incident occurred which shows the esteem in which he was held by the Seymour family. An old tree on the estate, venerable in its years and appearance, and with which some indistinct legends were connected, was struck by lightning and destroyed. The accident pained the old governor, and forthwith Brother Azarias wrote some verse of a consoling nature, commemorating the history and associations of the tree, and reviving one of its legends. So delighted was Seymour with this attention that he had the verses read at one of his social gatherings, had them read a second time in presence of a party assembled at a picnic around the old tree, and framed them for a perpetual memory of the thing. This intimacy of an influential political leader with the Mullany family is



recorded with a purpose. English statesmen have been recently curious about the influence of the Irish vote in American politics, and have been assured that its power was mythical, or the resultant of disreputable forces at work in the lower forms of political life. But impartial students of American conditions find in such incidents as the above the true source of that influence which has secured for England more than one snub from the Federal Government.



BLESSED JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE



## CHAPTER VI.

### LETTERS AND VERSES.

THUS far we have seen Brother Azarias more in the light of his environment from his birthplace in Ireland, through a four years' stay in an American village, to the classroom of a Christian Brother. A few of his own letters remain, which cover part of the period described. With the aid of these readers can form some idea of the man's personality and of the human side of him. In our letters we are stripped of the artificialities imposed upon us by self-love or human conventions. Few men appear well in their correspondence. Fewer appear respectable in the verses penned when gooseflesh was taken as an evidence of poetic inspiration, when the divine pain of the earnest mind struggling for the loftest expression was thought to betoken the birth of Minerva. In the letters and verses quoted in this chapter Brother Azarias shall speak for himself on those matters which so far have been in the hands of the biographer.

#### *On Attaining His Majority.*

DEAR FATHER:—Our closing exercises of the scholastic year took place on last Tuesday and passed off very agreeably. We had beautiful music, comic songs, the grand and thrilling speeches of Patrick Henry and Robert Emmet, and some fine essays. We conferred degrees and gave certificates of proficiency, and

awarded gold and silver medals and splendid premiums. I was very desirous that you should be present. You know that the day before was the anniversary of my birth, and on that day I was full twenty-one—the age of manhood. I remember how glad you were when I was fourteen—arrived, you said, at the age when I ought to have been two-thirds of a man. I ought certainly be called a whole man now; but really I am as light and giddy as a boy of ten. I wish you would manage to come along some time this week and see for yourself. I said “I wish,” but I really mean that I request you. It will recreate and invigorate you to spend a week with us in this lovely country. And I know very well that to see the face of “Patrick” will make you three years younger. So you must by all means come along. Brother Justin is going to California on the 16th. I am certain he would like to see you before he starts, and, no doubt, you would like to see him. I shall feel very lonesome after him, because I was attached to him, and saw him so often in the last two years. I feel as though my best friend is going to part from me. I hope mother is enjoying good health and is happy. Give her my love. Alice, I expect, is praying hard for me and the whole family. Has she joined the sisterhood yet? How is John doing? A good boy, no doubt. Perhaps I mistook in calling him “boy.” I imagine him to be a fine, able, hopeful, helpful young man. And Mary and Margaret? Good little girls, studying hard and doing all in their power to please their dear mother. But you will tell me all these things when you come along. With love to all the family, I remain your affectionate son,

BROTHER AZARIAS.

ROCK HILL, July 5th, 1868.

Six years of community life, supposed by so many to be a drag on the spirits and death to the human, had not chilled the young monk's love for his own,

nor shaken his natural pride in attaining his majority. In the following letter he gives us a brief treatise on the religious life while persuading his parents to yield to the wishes of their eldest daughter to become a Sister of Charity.

*On the Religious State.*

VERY DEAR PARENTS:—Your welcome letter has just been received. I deserve all that John told me, and more too. But you see I profit by his reproof. I am happy and my health is improving. It affords me consolation to hear that you, sisters, and brother are also enjoying good health. So Alice desires to be a Sister of Charity! Well, I am really glad to hear it. But I am not surprised. I always thought that her portion was not to be of earth. She was too good not to deserve more than the world could give. Hers is to be the hundredfold of joy and consolation promised by our dear Lord to those who renounce all to follow Him. For you too, dear father and mother, it ought to be a source of happiness. You ought to consider it so even in an earthly point of view. You will be assured of seeing one of your loved children walking in the path of truly heroic holiness, and fixed in a truly happy life—the only life of real happiness. Oh, surely hers is a happy lot! You yourselves will acknowledge it when you consider the many vicissitudes people are subject to in this deceitful world. Your own experience and observation point out to you the uncertainty of a worldly life, its disappointments and vexations, its anxieties and cares—and above all the difficulty of saving one's soul and loving God. In embracing a religious life one devotes one's self to practising the perfections of Christianity, to prayer and charity—charity toward God and our neighbor. When in religion we love God we also love our neighbor, and are happy in doing



him some service. You are aware of the unbounded good that the Sister of Charity has done and is doing—good to the orphan, to the sickly, to those who frequent their schools. I am then very glad to hear that she desires to join the Sisters of Charity. It is an order loved and esteemed of God and men. She can be happy in it with a true and unchanging happiness. She can pray for you—for your temporal and eternal welfare. And who dare think that her prayer will not be heard and cherished by God, who will, be assured, reward your sacrifice? I am thankful to Alice for the beautiful present she sends me. I shall cherish it and preserve it as a token of undying love. It seems the girls were not grateful to me for not sending them some Christmas token. That is very natural, as I gave them no reason to be grateful. Though having nothing to thank me for, I hope they were not angry with me, and that they prayed for me as well as before.

ROCK HILL, Easter, 1868.

A year later he writes to the sister who wished to enter the order of Sisters of St. Vincent de Paul.

*On a Scientific Trip to Washington.*

DEAR ALICE:—Your note arrived when I was in Washington, and as soon as I returned I received it. I was glad to hear from you, still more to hear all the good news you had to tell me—especially that most agreeable of all news, the excellent health that father and John now enjoy. You might be curious to know what I was doing in Washington. Well, not visiting the President, for he was not at home. Not seeking government employment, because long ago I forsook the avenues leading to such things. I heard some time ago that a man wishing to write a history of the devil went to Washington to collect materials—so

much better is he known there than in any other place, and so much nearer is it thought to be to hell. Indeed the conjecture is that it is only five miles distant. But I went there on no such mission. What then do you think my object was? You might be guessing all day, and yet not find out the right reason. So I will tell you, although it will interest you little. I went there the day before the eclipse, in order to observe it through the immense telescopes at the U. S. naval observatory. The greater part of the week that I spent there was employed in making scientific studies, particularly in reference to astronomy. I suppose you saw the eclipse through colored glass from Deerfield Hill, and no doubt it looked very beautiful. Let me ask you why John does not write at all nowadays. I am glad to hear that the crops are promising well this fall. I believe they are good throughout the whole country, although farmers in this part of the State have some light fears of a drought, and are anxiously expecting the blessing of rain. You said something about joining a sisterhood. I gave my opinion last year on the subject, and repeated it to father when he was here. By all means join the Sisters of Charity. They are a noble band of virgins. If you would ask me whether to go to the novitiate immediately, I would say, if your constitution is good, go; if you are still as delicate as formerly, wait; you are young enough yet. I assure you that you will be happier in religion than in the world. But why talk of inducements? I know that you are as pious and as resolved as of old. So pray for me.

Rock Hill, August, 1869.

The following is a specimen of the formal letter usually written at Christmas time to immediate relatives by the Brothers. Its formality is softened in this instance by pretty sentiment and hopeful verse.

*Christmas.*

VERY DEAR FATHER AND MOTHER:—Another year has rolled around, and I hasten to perform the very pleasant duty of sending you and brothers and sisters the greetings of the season. Yesterday I enjoyed the little Christmas entertainment that the students had before departing for their respective homes. It consisted of declamation, music, vocal and instrumental, and speeches, and it passed off in a manner satisfactory to all parties. We shall have a week's rest, until January 3d, when studies will be resumed. I suppose you are all well, prosperous, and happy as the beautiful season we are now enjoying, the pleasant Christmas holidays, with all their innocent, mirthful, recreative amusements. Last night I got thinking of old Ireland, and, looking up to the heavens, I thought that the many beautiful stars studding the dark vault five hours before had been looking down on all the friends I know there. At the very time I was looking up at them I know they were looking down on you,—we were under the same canopy, some little consolation,—not as great, of course, as the hope that we shall all meet again under the eye of God, in the light of His blissful vision.

We shall meet again in a brighter land,  
Where farewell is never spoken ;  
We shall clasp each other hand to hand,  
And the clasp shall not be broken.

We shall meet again in a happier clime,  
Where joy shall never know sadness ;  
And life shall ring, like a Christmas chime,  
With rapture and with gladness.

This is our great hope, and we owe it to the Babe of Bethlehem, whose birth we celebrate at this joyful time. We need not be surprised, then, that it is so happy a season, since it gives us such happy thoughts. How little reason infidels and un-Christian people have

for being merry during this time! It is only the Catholic that can really enjoy a Christmas day. . . . Love to all.

BROTHER AZARIAS.

ROCK HILL, Christmas, 1869.

These are fair specimens of the self-conscious and affectionate letters of a young monk, satisfied with himself and the lot which he had chosen, still innocent of the great problems of life which his own career was illustrating, prouder perhaps of his epistolary skill than of his affectionate heart, and of his penmanship than of his English. The next letter, however, shows the awakening of mind and heart to the great realities. It is dated six months after the preceding.

*On a Brother's Affection.*

DEAREST FATHER, MOTHER, BROTHER, AND SISTERS:—You may be surprised at my heading a note in this style, but the reason is simple. I was at Mount Hope yesterday and saw Alice. She told me to write to mother, and also to John. Now, as my time is much taken up at this season, I thought I could best comply with her request by writing to the whole family all at once. I said I went to see Alice—I spent at least three hours with her, the longest time we passed together since I left home. And we were so happy together! Indeed the time flew by very fast, and when poor Alice saw that I was preparing to go she remarked it and exclaimed, "So soon!" I thought it soon also, but a storm was gathering and I had to go. So I rallied her by saying that such will be our feelings at the end of life, even for the most long-lived. And do we not all hope with unwavering confidence that we shall meet together finally, and never hear

again an expression of disappointment at the shortness of time, for we shall then be in a blissful eternity? I am really charmed with Alice. She is so good, so pious, so tender, so loving. When I left home I was too young to appreciate what it is to have a good and loving sister. Not so now. Indeed, since I just saw her, there has welled up in my heart a joy, a pleasure, to which I have hitherto lived a complete stranger; and it is a feeling that will never pass away. I must tell you that Alice is content and happy, and says that not for all the world would she renounce her intention of becoming a Sister of Charity. She finds all the good Sisters so very, very kind. . . . I cannot refrain from expressing my gratitude to Sister Clementine for the many kindnesses she lavished on my dear sister, who speaks of her in the highest terms—indeed, her ideal of a Sister of Charity is Sister Clementine, and I think she is not much out of the way. I hope you are not grieving about Alice, for I assure you from my heart that “she hath chosen the better part.” You must think of her as happy and praying for you. And in turn you must not forget to say a prayer for her perseverance, not forgetting one who needs them far more in the person of

Your son,

BROTHER AZARIAS.

ROCK HILL, June, 1870.

The following letter is a good instance of the joyful human nature that lived in the faithful monk, who for over fifteen years had lived up to the standard of the community life.

*On Passing Matters.*

DEAR FRIEND:—Having had a few spare hours this morning, I took occasion to read the essay with care. I am not only pleased but surprised at the cleverness with which the writer handled a difficult theme.

Nothing has been neglected. Every element of education has been taken into account. Of course the essay is not perfect. But it were ill-natured in me to make strictures where there is so much to praise. And I am reserving all my ill-nature just now for a sharp criticism I am going to write upon an atheistic work of philosophy just out, written by Herbert Spencer, and called "*Principles of Sociology.*" The editor of the *Catholic American Quarterly* placed it in my hands for the purpose, when I was passing through Philadelphia. By the way, I took occasion then to send you a copy of my little book upon the philosophy of literature. I suppose you received it with the accompanying note. And I also suppose that by this time you are heartily tired of it, as a dry, uninteresting book. But, of course, you will not tell me so. I do not know but that you may even think it splendid. It would be of a piece with your judgment of the author. I saw your letter to a friend, and I regret to find you make so false an estimate of your humble servant. I would much rather you knew me better, for then you would pray more earnestly and sincerely for me. . . . Pray that I may persevere in my holy vocation, and that God's will may be done in my regard. I know not what the future has in store for me; but I feel that life is a success only in proportion as it is guided by the hand of Providence. I need scarcely tell you that I was delighted with my stay in your friend's house. I found there the same kindness, unwearying, unflagging, never thinking they could do too much. And the greatest attraction was that important newcomer, on whom everybody danced attendance, and who received the homage of all with a right royal grace, as if still retaining a memory of the heavenly courts, from which she came when fashioned by the hand of the celestial King. I need not say that I allude to little Lucy, the sweetest, brightest baby I ever beheld, scarce a cry from night to morning, easily pleased, and with unfathomable



depths in the blue eyes. Gazing into them I felt with Wordsworth that

Not in entire forgetfulness  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home.  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy.

ROCK HILL, May, 1877.

Ill health drove Brother Azarias abroad in this year, and the following letter to the same friend is dated from France.

*Rouen.*

DEAR FRIEND:—In this old town—so full of historic recollections that give food to memory and imagination, so full of objects of piety—I am at present resting. And I need not tell you that I am fatigued, in fact, *entre nous*, I am very ill; but I am battling with it till I get to Paris. My voyage has done me no good whatever so far, however it may turn out afterward. My cough has a catch in it at present, and a pretty bad one. But whatever the best medical aid can do for me in Paris will be done at my pleasure. So I have not lost hope of returning to my dear friends a robust man. In the mean time pray for me that in all things God's will may be done in my regard. But how selfish I am to talk so much of myself in the presence of the monuments of civilization that everywhere meet my eye from the window at which now I write. Pardon my egotism. I will not occupy you with my impressions of London. My sojourn there was too short, and as I intend returning I can defer my account of things. . . . Rouen has a special interest for the Christian Brothers. It is the cradle of our order. Here the Blessed De La Salle did his most efficient work. Here repose his remains, sacred

relics over which I prayed with renewed fervor. I stood under the trees and walked in the paths which tradition points out as having been familiar to him. I plucked the leaves of one of those trees, and send you one. His statue stands in the square at the end of the bridge. It is a beautiful monument. The pedestal is marble; on the faces are the arms of the De La Salle family, the arms of Normandy, the seal of the Institute, and the seal of the diocese. On the four corners are children representing the American boy, the Chinese boy, the European boy, and the African boy. Around the pedestal is a pool of clear water with various little fishes disporting themselves. . . . I was present at high mass this morning. I never shall forget the impression it made. There were eight or ten venerable canons in full dress, chanting the office with fifty priests and as many boys with sweet, well-trained voices. The immense organ filled the aisles with its swelling tones, the choir sang some heavenly music, part plain chant, part figured music. The *Benedictus* was inspiring. I felt my soul expand in that vast church, and then fly heavenward, whither everything in it pointed, as did my thoughts—and then I caught at a string of earth to keep me in mind that this was still my habitation; and on that string, that bead-roll of memory, were all my dear friends. There was a sermon, good, but too mechanical for my taste, the inevitable three points, and it seemed too much a matter of course. I took to myself the part treating of the publican, and said with sincerity: God be merciful to me a sinner.

ROUEN, July, 1877.

To his sister he writes in the same year from Paris.

*On Gothic Cathedrals.*

DEAR SISTER VINCENT:— . . . If I were to try to forget you I could not succeed, for the simple reason

that wherever I go I meet with the good, dear, honored Sisters of Charity; and everywhere I find that they have for the Christian Brother a smile of recognition. Of course on such occasion I always think of my own dear sister who wears the same livery. . . . Since I came to Paris I have been under medical treatment for my lungs. The treatment has weakened me considerably, but I begin to regain my old strength and spirits, and altogether I will be much better for the treatment, though it was severe and I suffered much. . . . One of the most interesting sights to a traveler in Europe is the grand Gothic cathedrals that are to be found in nearly every city. There is nothing like them in America, and never will be. There they stand after braving the elements for hundreds of years, many of them unfinished in their steeples or other parts, but it would be sacrilege to attempt to piece them up in our modern style. They look more venerable as they stand. You notice the front as you enter. It is made up of columns all ending in a forest of leafing and flowering done in marble. You enter. The solemn appearance of everything banishes from your mind every trivial thought. All things speak of heaven. The very pillars ascend hundreds of feet, and meet at a point in the roof which seems lost in distance. All along are private chapels dedicated to some special saint, whose statue or picture you notice. In the center is the high altar. At either side are the stalls of the canons. This part is surrounded by a large iron railing. Here and there you meet with the tomb of some great bishop or soldier, or a king perhaps, which tells of his life and death, and celebrates in him virtues he may or may not have had.

PARIS, September, 1877.

These letters give a fair idea of the affectionate and kindly disposition of Brother Azarias, and the rich human nature which holds its own sturdily in the cloister, chastened and controlled, though the critics

of community life, as Catholic religious practise it, cannot be convinced that human nature survives the keeping of the vows. Like all literary men the good Brother tried his hand occasionally at verse, which is not the worst in the world, and, for the possessor of a graceful style in prose, may well compare with similar work from greater pens.

## GARLANDS FOR THE POETS.

## CHAUCER.

Shrewd Chaucer ! Shadows chilling deep invade  
The pleasant sunshine of the varied page,  
On which thy brilliant traits are all displayed  
Thy kindly humor mixed with maxims sage,  
Thy melting pathos, pictures of thy age,  
In verses simple and direct portrayed,  
Though by time-gathered rust now overlaid.

## SPENSER.

Mild Spenser ! Peaceful as the twilight star,  
While heavy gloom hung o'er thee here below,  
Thy fancy wandered long in regions far,  
And thou in streams of verse, that dally'ng flow  
Through vales enchanted 'mid a glimmering glow  
Of heav'nly beauty's charms untiring told,  
And virtue decked in such a lovely show,  
And all her graceful traits so well unrolled,  
With joy, and love, and awe unwearied we behold.

## SHAKESPEARE.

I watched the storm's blind fury ; black clouds palled  
The spacious vault of heaven and strong winds blew,  
And mutt'ring thunders to each other called,  
And every way the forked lightnings flew,  
And tall trees crashed, and rain in torrents fell  
And to their very base the hills did quake ;

And free and wild as storm my heart did swell,  
 And fancy with the lightnings sport did make—  
 The storm was hushed, the clouds passed off, in calm  
 The earth and sky embraced, the pale moon's sheen  
 Spoke peace, and in my heart a peaceful psalm  
 Resounded soft as I mused on the scene.  
 So sways our changing moods thy magic art,  
 Weird wizard master of the human heart.

MILTON.

Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,  
 An earthly guest, and drawn Empyreal fire.

PARADISE LOST, b. vii.

Irreverent Milton! Bold I deem thy flight;  
 Unsanctified, unbidden, thou didst wing  
 Thy pathless way off tow'rd the secret spring  
 Of God's decrees, and read them not aright;  
 Thou sought to do what no man mortal might:  
 Still thence a speech majestic didst bring,  
 And there o'erheard some angels whispering  
 Of Eden's bliss, and from thy lofty height  
 Surveyed all starry space both far and wide,  
 And saw hell's deepest depths and tortures dire,  
 And viewed the darkling works of demon pride,  
 And in the glowings of poetic fire,  
 What time thy heart felt age's chilly hand,  
 Embodied all in language stately, grand.

DRYDEN.

Keen Dryden! Strong, and trained, and apt  
 In handling the satiric shaft;  
 But weak before temptation's windy breath,  
 Weak when a blighting gale did waft  
 Thy treasured soul down vice's stream—  
 'Tis well that in thy torpored dream,  
 Ere thou wert vanished to the land of death,  
 The radiance of Truth's brilliant gleam  
 Did make thy misery appear,  
 And cause thee o'er it drop a tear,

And nerve thee to thy precious time redeem,  
By manly verses rolling strong and clear.

## POPE.

The flow'r of poesy, with careful hand  
Well tended, and by spicy breezes fanned  
Beneath the auspices of a fair sky,  
Waxed sweet to smell and beautiful to eye,  
Within thy mind's trim garden. But outside,  
There grew a tree whose roots struck deep and wide  
Into a poisoned soul; its branches drew  
Deep draughts from the death-lurking source, and grew,  
And o'er thy cherished plot their lengthy shade  
Outstretched: the flow'r began to droop and fade;  
For they shut out the sun's life-giving rays,  
And dripped a poisoned fluid on her fresh bays—  
And thou, intent on pruning all around,  
Thought not of looking up, but on the ground  
Thy eyes kept steadfast, feeling satisfied  
Beneath its shade refreshing to abide.

## BURNS.

With fragment strains thy page is strewn;  
Some soft and sweet, breathe heaven's tone,  
Some wild and weird, in mournful moan,  
Belch passion's fire;  
Grand music might through thee have flown,  
Thou broken lyre.

## BYRON.

Wild bard of passion writhing in the chain  
Whose links were forged in riot and lawless sport,  
Thou who the balm of poesy didst court,  
And chanted loud the misanthropic strain,  
In Nature's vast and solitary fane—  
Why madly quit sweet innocence's calm port,  
And to soft pleasure's eddying pool resort,  
To damp thy genius and thy soul to stain?



Intoxicated by the cup thou quaffed,  
A lonely man, I see thee fiercely stride  
The earth in smoky glare of swollen pride,  
And trailing inspiration's mantle aft.  
Thy lightning-laden lines, great depths unseal  
In thy dark being, and prisoned pow'rs reveal.

## WORDSWORTH.

I sat upon a rounded, moss-grown stone,  
Enticed there by a little cascade-leap  
O'er a beach-tree's bare roots; in a white heap  
The waters gathered, and the monotone,  
Now dull and bubbling, now mysterious grown,  
Caused strange and nameless feelings o'er me creep;  
I tried to speak, but they were far too deep  
For utterance. Ah! he from earth has flown,  
Whose genius on this spot would raptured dwell,  
Who was deep read in Nature's precious lore,  
To whom the zephyr's breath, the tempest's roar,  
The brooklet's ring, the cataract's loud swell—  
All gave a music he could well divine,  
The mighty Poet Priest of Nature's shrine.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BALTIMORE.

HIS superiors appointed Brother Azarias head of Rock Hill College at Ellicott City, Md., when he had just passed his thirty-second milestone on the journey of time. Within ten years he had proved himself an educator of the first rank and of the loftiest standards. His writings had won for him eminence among the younger thinkers, and his future promised to be brilliant. It seemed hardly possible, though, that a man of so quiet and studious habits would recommend himself to shrewd superiors as the proper person to administer a modern college. His tastes were those of the student, his world was the world of books, his cloister had no horizon but heaven and knowledge. In his early days of teaching the gentleness of his soul made him a poor disciplinarian, and for a few years the discipline of his classes was the care of hardier souls. He was now a successful teacher as well as a successful writer; but his mental and physical and social habits remained as peaceful as before, and there seemed to be little of the (mettle) *phi* required for school administration in the scholar. A shrewd mind, however, was then the superior of the Institute in the United States, Brother Patrick, who died a few years ago in the office of assistant-general, at Paris. He was a capable man, had seen the begin-

nings of his order in the country, possessed a rich experience in administration, and was of a large mould mentally and socially. His beneficent influence was felt in every walk of life whither his pupils travelled, and stories could be told of the fine results springing from his suggestions, his advice, and his aid in a variety of enterprises for the advancement of the religious spirit in the land. For example, when once asked by a young journalist for his help in securing a position on the press, he suggested that the young man devote his talents to the founding of a Catholic journal for the spread of the faith and its great principles. The journalist agreed. Brother Patrick introduced him to moneyed friends, and a scheme was arranged which finally resulted within a few years in the publication of three weekly papers and a monthly periodical, all of thoroughly Catholic tone and of first-class matter. It was an ordinary affair for Brother Patrick to make valuable suggestions of this kind, and to back them with practical support where he could, though not all his ideas might bear such fruit.

He had watched the career and the character of Brother Azarias with a father's interest and a superior's concern. He had encouraged him in his studies and secured him large leisure for his investigations and his writings. He felt how great was the need of such men as Brother Azarias to the Catholic people in America, and how much greater that need would be before the close of the century. It seemed to his practical mind only fitting that, other things being equal, a teacher and writer of distinction should be at the head of an important institution like the

college of Rock Hill. The main question was whether Brother Azarias possessed the administrative qualities, and also the right prudence in financial matters, which such a position demands. The seven years of his management seem to have justified the previsions of Brother Patrick. Not only did his name shed lustre on the college, but his administration of studies and finances was so admirable that his appointment to the presidency of Manhattan College had been determined on when he retired from his position at Rock Hill. He proved himself in the difficult matter of finance a careful and thrifty manager, in the details of administration careful and patient, in the superintendence of his aids and his students watchful and considerate. In a brief time the quiet student showed himself the owner of very valuable qualities of executive power, as quiet and undemonstrative, but fully as effective, as his literary talents. The official position provided him with a pedestal for the better use of his scholarly acquirements, and gave him an important rank in a society which, more than any other part of the country, valued the intrinsic worth of high position, whether of family, of office, or of character.

In the social conditions of the Baltimore district Brother Azarias, by reason of his achievements, his robe, and his office, became a person of eminence. As such he became even more popular with the non-Catholic circles than with his own, which could not easily forget hierarchical distinctions, nor merge the lay monk into the man of learning. President Gilman of Johns Hopkins became his admiring friend. That eminent and successful educator had

cultivated kindly relations with the Christian Brothers while in California. Brother Azarias paid him a visit of congratulation upon his arrival in Baltimore to launch the new university, invited him to the occasions at Rock Hill, and asked his assistance in the revisions of his manuscripts; and thus began a neighborly intimacy which endured with ever-increasing respect on both sides for many years. As we shall see later on, the scientific and literary attainments of Brother Azarias made him the peer of the educators of his time, while his interpretation of the literary and educational movements of the past, and also of literary masterpieces, his philosophical knowledge and methods, gave him an advantage over them, which they were quick to perceive and appreciate. These things explain in part the attraction which he had for men like Bayley, Gilman, and Corcoran.

The Archbishop of Baltimore, James Roosevelt Bayley, was one of the striking characters of the time, a convert from Protestantism, a man of deep culture, and a thoroughgoing missionary, who certainly added to the lustre of the primatial see, though personally he took little comfort out of it. It was of him and the other bishops of the province that Brother Azarias wrote in his notes of the retreat at Paris: "I have the confidence of the bishops." He was brought into pleasant relations with them through his official position, and they certainly gave him their approval. Two of them have since come into world-wide prominence, Cardinal Gibbons and Archbishop Keane, whose letters and other public utterances on the noble character of Brother Azarias have done his reputation great service. But Monsignor Corcoran prized him

above all the others, and took pains to show his esteem and his affection. The Monsignor was said to be in his day the most learned ecclesiastic in the country, a beautiful character, who united in himself the erudition of a sage and the simplicity of a child. He was a professor in Overbrook seminary, and the editor of the *Catholic Quarterly*, for which many of Brother Azarias' articles were written. He revised every line that the Brother printed, and gave his advice beforehand on the selection of subjects and the method of treatment. So that the rather vivid criticism, lavished upon the earlier productions of the Brother by the journalists of the day, was as much aimed at Mgr. Corcoran as at their author. The learned professor, however, wrote nothing himself, for he was without ambition. In his early life he had written some books, which remained in manuscript until one unlucky day, when the house containing them was burned to the ground. They perished, and their author seemed better content over the disaster than his admirers, who were acquainted with his deep learning. Until his death he was the fast friend and steady admirer of the young man whose literary labors he had so long encouraged and guided.

—Associating with men of this stamp, dealing regularly with the parents of his students, Brother Azarias speedily became noted in the ecclesiastical province, and the intimate friend of its most distinguished priests and laymen. The Baltimore community is a picturesque and admirable pattern of one phase of social life in the United States. It adheres to the old colonial traditions tenaciously, in business, pleasure, social customs, and religion. These tradi-



tions are in great part English, with a flavor of far Southern graciousness, modified by Northern smartness. The business men retire from active commercial life when they have secured a competence, and devote their days to the ordinary pursuits of a country or city gentleman—that is, to pleasant living of a refined and quiet sort; a thing utterly incomprehensible to the average business man elsewhere, who holds to his desk while there is good profit to be made. Their children are often educated abroad, generally in England. The social circle is exclusive, but its hospitality is undoubted, and as simple as the ancestral list is long. The beginnings of American social life were made in Baltimore, as the beginnings of America literary life can be said to have been made in the Massachusetts colony, whose capital was Boston. The Catholic Church in the United States began its official existence there, when John Carroll was made Bishop of Baltimore. The religious communities naturally opened their first establishments in the same favored spot, and were heartily supported by the people, who sent them pupils for their schools and novices for their congregations. Hardly a Catholic family of the region, with many non-Catholic families, but has a representative in one or other of the religious communities, lay and sacerdotal.

For many years the ecclesiastical province of Baltimore was in fact, as well as in name, the centre of Catholic organization in the Republic; and, while the drift of circumstances has taken from it the primacy of numbers and influence, its prelates, its institutions, and its social life have se-

cured for it a pre-eminence of excellence not yet overcome by the towering material advantages of the great cities. The province possesses a spirit of enterprise quite different from its brethren, who are inclined to look down upon its slowness, yet do not seem able to attain to its powers of acquisition. The new Catholic University is located there, and the Cardinal of Baltimore is its chancellor. The Jesuits have their *collegium maximum* at Woodstock, their university at Georgetown, a college in Washington and Baltimore, and their novitiate at Frederick; the Sulpitians have charge of a seminary famous for the number of its graduates, and its progress in the art of training the Levite; the Redemptorists, the Paulists, and the Marists have there established their novitiates and houses of studies—in fact, within a small space, the province holds more excellence than many of the richer and more populous provinces put together.

This little world received Brother Azarias as the president of a noted institution with open arms. The non-Catholics were readier with their welcome than his brethren, because they had no prejudices to argue with before recognizing his ability and making use of his talents. But in the end his merit was heartily honored on all sides. The Catholics of Baltimore were cautious people, as Catholics are mostly in the United States. Conscious of their inferior numbers, of the readiness with which bigotry lights its camp-fires, of the numberless excuses at hand for persecution, they are more than considerate of Protestant prejudice, and rarely celebrate the triumphs of their own until the winners return crowned with secular

laurel. This accidental distrust of their leaders is not confined to a small class, it is the vice of the Catholic American conditions; and a natural consequence of it is that many who win the secular laurel never come back to receive the plaudits of their brethren in the faith. Brother Azarias illustrated one feature of the situation when he became the president of Rock Hill College. His appointment to that position placed an emphasis on a question which had tormented the administration of the Christian Brothers' Institute, and stirred up local feeling for over twenty years. This question was the right and duty of the Brothers to manage classical colleges at all. It was generally understood by outsiders and by a section of the Brothers themselves, that their sphere was the parish school, the reformatory, and the technical school. As a matter of fact, their taking up of the classical college in the United States was a mere result of the American conditions.

In the year 1853 Brother Patrick was in charge of the Brothers' Academy in St. Louis, when he was approached by Archbishop Kenrick with the request that he take up the work of training young men for the seminary in the diocese of St. Louis. The reasons given by the bishop were the great need of ~~diocesan~~ priests for the American mission, and the difficulty of securing the proper vocations in the existing situation. Brother Patrick pointed out to him the custom of the Christian Brothers in the establishment of their schools, and the difficulty of modifying the situation. Feeling the reasonableness of the request, however, he agreed to present the matter to the next chapter of the Institute to be held in Paris,

and asked for letters from the archbishops of the country in support of the affair. Provided with these letters from the archbishops of St. Louis, New Orleans, Baltimore, and New York, he was present at the chapter held in Paris in 1854, described the request of the archbishops, the reasons for it, the condition in America, and similar things; and by a *viva voce* vote, for the Brothers were deeply touched by the embarrassing situation of the American prelates, permission was granted to the Brothers in America to take charge of classical colleges whenever and wherever invited in the United States for the honorable purpose of training candidates for the seminaries.

+ The earliest result of this permission was the founding of such institutions as the Brothers' colleges in St. Louis, New York, and Baltimore. At first, being without Latin scholars in the community, they were content with engaging laymen as classical teachers; but in time they were enabled to dispense with this aid, and to provide teachers of their own. The bishops were quick to take advantage of the new order of things, and offers were made to the Brothers from many prelates to take charge of institutions. Among them Archbishop Alemany, of San Francisco, a shrewd, able, and holy man, secured from Pope Pius IX. an absolute order upon the Brothers that they take up a vacant college in his diocese, and proceed to the teaching of young men for the seminary. They had no choice but to obey. From that day this new branch of their labors has prospered. Among all their successes these effective teachers are prouder of none than of the number of vocations they have secured for the Church.

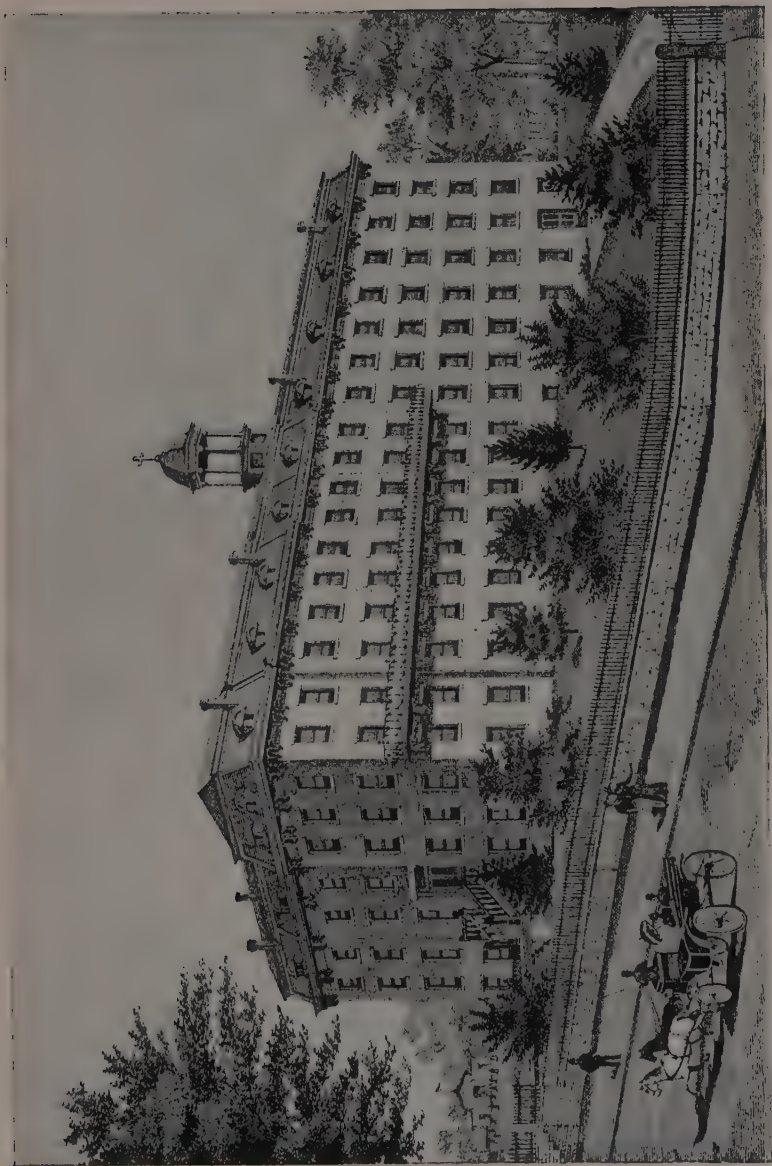
The question was honestly raised, however, if they were not departing from the spirit of the Institute, from the holy intentions of their founder, in thus taking up a work which seemed foreign to his ideas; and up to this moment it has not been finally settled. At the time of Brother Azarias' appointment to the presidency of Rock Hill it was still a delicate question, and his nomination gave it peculiar emphasis. Here was a lay monk who not only knew Latin and Greek, but held a high position in letters and was probably the most distinguished personage of his time at the head of a Catholic college. His office and his character together made it clear that the Brothers had entered upon a period of development whose end was not easily to be foreseen. Thus a delicate and difficult matter became intensified by the elevation of this quiet and unpretentious man to a position of honor, and the discussions of 1855 were renewed as to the sphere of the Institute and the aims of the founder. Most of the disputants on one side ignored the share which circumstances have in reshaping the currents of thought and action in religious communities. There is often to be found in members of these communities a half-secret thought that their order partakes in some fashion of the immutability and indefectibility of the Church. It leads them into oddities of speech and action, which men like Cardinal Wiseman take great pleasure in scoring, as he did in his now famous letter to Father Faber on the religious communities of London, who refused him their co-operation in looking after the poor Catholics of the city, on the ground that their rules prohibited work of that kind. Souls were perishing, but the supposed

aim of the community founders was much more than souls!

The influence at work in this instance was principally the need of the country—the need of priests for the mission. But the secondary, and even more powerful influence was that deep conviction, fostered and developed by Blessed De La Salle himself, illustrated for fifteen decades by the unconscious action of his children, and grown to giant strength in this century, that the teacher of children and youth must be a person of the highest culture as well as of the purest character, something more than a specialist in the alphabet, or in mathematics, or in classical learning. This conviction is shaping the training of the modern teacher, and had Archbishop Kenrick and his brethren never mentioned their desire for an increase of vocations, it is very probable that the spirit of the times would have forced the Brothers in America into the management of classical colleges. In France the Institute avoids the main issue by confiding the teaching of the classics to lay professors; yet this evasion, to the average mind, is nothing less than a substantial adoption of the classical college into the Brothers' scheme of labor. In France, also, the law requires that the heads of academical institutions shall have a degree from the University of Paris, to get which the candidates must have made a thorough classical course. This particular law was said to have been aimed at the very existence of the Institute. The Brothers escaped its penalties by sending up for a degree the heads of their schools, who were forced to make official announcement of their classical acquirements in consequence.



These facts are mentioned here that the reader may see the full significance of the position held by Brother Azarias when he became the administrative head of a college. The humorous side of the situation was the gentle surprise of his brethren in the faith, that a Christian Brother should possess so many acquirements, and ambitions so high as to take rank with the learned no less than with the dignitaries of office. He had already been suspected of making a show of learning with the aid of the encyclopedia, of talking profoundly on topics and questions and writers with which he had only third-hand acquaintance. One sincere and distinguished man, who had read his books with pleasure, protested against this unseemly display of remote quotation. It was perfectly plain, he said, that this young monk could not be familiar with the Greek, Latin, French, and mediæval authorities, whose names and sayings he used; and it was pedantic, even silly, and in a humble-minded monk quite sinful, to make the pretence of deep investigation with true scholars at hand to expose him any moment. However, he had to accept the evidences placed before him of the Brother's real scholarship. The sceptical were also persuaded of its genuineness in time. The people of Baltimore did not need persuasion, but took him straight into their hearts, made life as pleasant for him as they knew, and so fixed his affections in that soil by their kindness that no place on earth was so dear to him as his college and its beautiful neighborhood.



ROCK HILL COLLEGE



## CHAPTER VIII.

### AN AMERICAN CATHOLIC COLLEGE.

APART from all discussion the Brothers found themselves in charge of classical colleges, engaged in training, at the request of the bishops, young men for the seminaries. The practical side of the matter then was, and now is, that custom had fully established the condition, which cannot be changed in a moment without some danger to the supply of vocations. At the request of the hierarchy, with the consent of superiors, by the advice of the prudent who were acquainted with American circumstances, and with good results in every decade from the venture, the work had been taken up and continued. It was only one illustration of the change wrought in every department of the Church's organization by the needs of the American mission. Cardinal Wiseman could make reasonable and most pathetic complaint to that holy and indefatigable worker among the people, Father Faber, that the exigencies of community rule interfere with the salvation of the souls. No such complaint could be made in the United States against religious communities. Wherever they settled their superiors sensibly surrendered to the demands of the time, took charge of parishes with the ordinary parochial limits, of country missions, of prisons, hospitals, and other charities, of schools and academies,

and made themselves generally useful, without more than respectful regard for the rules of their order. When the people need bread it is no condescension that princes should turn bakers.

As the conditions improved and vocations became common the religious communities reverted at their convenience to the method of labor and life peculiar to their rule. With some of these orders the process of reversion is still going on. It will be long before it is complete. They have done good in a wider field under the American conditions than in the European. New needs, new methods! The schools of the Christian Brothers in France are famous for their perfection in method and result. In the United States they enjoy as much distinction for the numbers of young men whom they fashioned for the work of the mission, at a time when every priest was worth his weight in gold. It will be long before the Church in America can repay that good service, and longer still before the Institute can forget the most glorious page in its annals.

When Brother Azarias became the superior of Rock Hill College, it had been in existence a quarter of a century, and had won its spurs in honorable combat with the usual difficulties of new institutions. It was no longer an experiment, but a success, and stood on an equality with institutions of the same class for efficiency. It had suffered its doubtful moments. In particular the great war between the North and the South had one time threatened it, so bitter were the feelings engendered among the students of the opposing sections. Nevertheless it passed into the care of the new president in good shape. He found himself,

like the ancient patriarchs, the absolute master and father of a little community, which followed the main lines of patriarchal and community life, as they are followed nowhere else. He was the source of authority for the community. There was no going or coming or remaining without his knowledge and permission. Every detail of daily life was in his mind and under his eye. He was the leader, the director, the instructor, in the spiritual and intellectual and community life for his aids: and the father and teacher of his students, who came to him in all their needs for advice, help, or dispensation.

The French family furnished the model for the American college which trains the Catholic youth. The superior stood in the place of the parents absolutely. The discipline was family discipline, with a severer interpretation because of numbers and of the unknown quantities in the individuals. The interpretation took the military form. At six o'clock every boy was out of bed, and at nine o'clock of the night he was in it again; in consequence his parents slept sweetly at home on that simple fact. The fifteen waking hours were pleasantly and healthfully divided between study and play. The community spirit was in the air. The boys played in the same field, used the same gymnasium, and one swimming-pond; they slept in the same dormitory, ate in the same refectory, used the same study-room; the only division took place in the classes, which had their separate recitation-rooms. In the larger colleges the boys were separated into three groups, the minims, mediums, and elders, who lived in separate parts of the college, and met only on occasions. Without permission no



student left the grounds except at the risk of expulsion. At all times they were under some kind of supervision no matter how slight, and the disciplinarian was held responsible for their conduct night and day. Thus, for ten months, broken by the Christmas vacation, the student disappeared from the public ways, and lived in close communion with his fellows and superiors.

Such a rule of life is possible nowhere but under the dominion of love and faith. It had admirable results and some inconveniences. The close-knit friendships there formed are like nothing else in the world for depth and beauty. The mutual regard of scholars and teachers is the rich oil which does away with friction. The true Christian life is kept green and vigorous by the steady appeal to the religious spirit, by the steady use of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist. It is Christ who reigns in these families. The inconveniences are mainly the lack of opportunities for training the boy in self-reliance, and a moral indolence which sometimes leaves a boy's character hidden from teacher and himself until the world gives it too rude a test. But these things have long engaged the mind of superiors, and efforts have been made to do away with them. In any case the system is much safer for the boy than the irresponsible disciplines so common in the secular colleges. The moral and religious fruits of the training are incomparably superior, and the physical benefits of regular and plentiful sleep, of exercise, of kindly and genial companionship, of intimacy with superiors, are life-long.

The mental training is better in some departments,

in others worse, than that received in the secular colleges of the same rank. The difference arises from the difference of aim and method. The superiority of the Catholic college in certain departments springs from the absence of prejudice in one study, the wider horizon in another, the more practical intentions in a third. For example, nothing is taken for granted in the subject of modern history; the great fact of the revolt of Luther against the Church is met frankly, as well as its consequences up to the present time; all is examined and explained with the aid of the best Catholic and the fairest Protestant writers; because in the United States the young Catholic has to be well prepared for the onslaught sure to be made upon his faith by that great conspiracy against historic truth, called history in the English-speaking world. In the same fashion the doctrines of Christianity are taught face to face with the Protestant theories of the religion of Christ, and the latter are thoroughly refuted; while the errors of Protestant philosophy are exposed and described. In the study of Latin the method employed in the earlier days was that used for the living language as it is used by the Church and her scholars and officials.

In colleges not Catholic these three studies have been markedly inferior in aim, method, and results. In history the historic continuity of the Catholic Church is carefully concealed from the student, and the presumption runs through the text-books and the class-lectures that the great Church is practically out of existence; her services in the Middle Ages are blotted out by the fiction that these ages were Dark with a capital D; and a thousand artifices are used

to create the impression in the student's mind that no chapter of human history is more shameful than that which describes the influence of the Church up to the arrival of Luther. Protestant doctrines are taught with as little reference as possible to Catholic dogmas, which when mentioned at all are admirably mutilated. Catholic philosophy is unheard of. The study of Latin has long been given up for the study of classical literature, a curious distortion of the ancient aim and method, which has had the worst results for American scholarship. Thus, in three departments the Catholic college has been easily the superior of its secular contemporaries.

The deficiencies of the system at the start sprang from the exigencies of the time; later they had their origin, some at least, in a servile imitation of the secular institutions. The main object of two-thirds of the colleges has been to train young men for the priesthood, and to do the work for each candidate in the shortest possible time. The demand for priests became heavy ten years before the Civil War. The chief study was necessarily the Latin language, to which all others had to be subordinated. English took second place, perhaps, but not a good second; mathematics was more cultivated by the professors than by the students, history was popular, literature had a fair place, philosophy and Christian doctrine were the favorites after Latin. When students who intended to study for the professions began to frequent the colleges a change became necessary in the curriculums. Some of these young men wished to enter the secular universities, others to enter commercial life, and a third part were desirous of taking

up law, or medicine, or engineering. The clerical training was unsuited to their needs, and the changes made in their behalf affected the whole system. Mathematics became more prominent, the vernacular competed with Latin for first place, while the study of the Latin language degenerated into a mere reading of certain classical authors. More attention was paid to the arts of expression, to rhetoric and oratory. The senior class devoted a great part of the year of graduation to the study of composition and of eloquence, and to the practice of public speaking.

A curious feature of the system was the exclusion of newspapers and magazines from the reading-room, a feature taken from the European discipline, and grounded on the supposition that such publications were either obnoxious to morality or to sound habits of reading. The time required to make the course of studies from primary Latin to the close of the study of philosophy was six or eight years. At graduation the young man of moderate ability and industry had an education in which he could feel a certain satisfaction. If he was rather weak in mathematics, natural science, and contemporaneous literature and thought, he made up for the weakness by his skill in dialectics, his knowledge of the errors of the time, his acquaintance with the best authors in Latin, Greek and English, his ability to address an audience, his acquaintance with Christian doctrine, and his precise understanding of the Protestant claim to a superior position in modern society. The social as well as the intellectual life of the college had planted in him the principles and methods of a healthful activity, both of soul and mind, which could not but secure for him

a career in society, in the face of the adverse conditions prepared for the Catholic. The exclusion of the newspaper and the magazine did not exclude the questions which they discussed, nor the news which they provided; and these were often sifted in hours of leisure, and the opinions of the professors sought on them.

I recall my own graduating class of two decades ago, in which the disputes on rival systems of government, conflicting principles in philosophy, the Irish question, the character of Gladstone, the American political parties, the merits of Dickens, Scott, Newman, Brownson, Longfellow, were no less ardent, and no less interesting and well-informed, than the arguments on the merits of the previous Sunday's sermon, and the prospects of the college baseball club for the season. We had all read such books as Brownson's "American Republic," such authors as Chateaubriand, Montalembert, Newman, Wiseman, Manning, Faber, England, Spalding, with the whole round of poets, novelists, and essayists; and if the reading was hardly critical, we never lacked subjects for student chatter, or material for the hottest grade of discussion. The great charm of the college career, however, was the one most of us lightly regarded then: that we had grown up together in the one household like brethren, under the loving care of our elder brother, Jesus Christ, whose Sacred Body was our monthly feast, in whose Sacrament of Penance we bathed our souls. We had lived many years in the most beautiful harmony, in the most thorough enjoyment, and had come to be like one another in habits of speech, thought, and living. It was only when the

final parting came that we suspected the true character of the golden age from which we were about to be cut off forever.

It was truly a golden age, by reason of youth chiefly, and then by reason of the social life of the college. More innocent fun was packed into a month than the outside world could give us in twelve. The steadiness of the routine and the separation from the life of the town made necessary the establishment of a social life of our own with its healthy distractions. The campus was the scene, the forum of the college. There the athletes displayed their skill and form, the gossipers retailed the news of the house and the world, the controversialists wrangled, the traders secretly swapped knives and tobacco, the politicians laid their plans, the pirates planned their next raid on the pantry, and the jokers discussed the trick to be played on their neighbors. There the annual games were held. There also the programmes for the regular entertainments were arranged; and the students shrieked their delight when the master of the revels went about, asking the wrong boys to volunteer the accomplishments which they did not possess for the first minstrel show. These revels were anything from the presentation of "Julius Cæsar" to the banjo and the bones. They called out in turn the talents of the house. Could a man dance, sing, declaim, act, play a musical instrument, or make a fool of himself, he was in demand. Had he a reputation for poetic or eloquent English, or for stage management, his fellows flattered him. The glee-club, the orchestra, the choir were ever in need of members; but the declaimers and actors were too numerous, for



not one but thought he could "speak a piece" or play a part in farce or drama. It was royal fun all the time.

Thrown into such intimate and candid companionship—and boys are barbarians for candor—they learned to know weak and strong points of character well, and played upon both with equal skill. Perhaps no college in the country is without its fools: the writer of love-letters to imaginary dames, the declaimer gone mad over *Spartacus to the Gladiators*, the dandy, and the pseudo-poet. These were game for the college sportsman, who found subjects for each fool to exercise his folly upon, and exhibited him meanwhile to the public. Yet there was no savagery, no hazing in the Catholic college. The current of honest affection ran beneath the daily life and hindered the frightful displays of barbarism so common and so popular in the secular schools. Everywhere in the house hung the figure of Christ. He was the great Teacher of all hearts, to Whom the discipline appealed rather than to the fear of punishment. The social life culminated for the student in the annual efflorescence called commencement day, which has become in America an occasion of great display. Its exercises are usually held in a theatre, in the presence of as large an audience as the place can hold, with the graduates and dignitaries occupying the stage. There are the customary honors, bouquets, and addresses. The set oration is entrusted to the most noted man who can be secured for the task. A certain significance, if the authorities so choose, is attached to his speech, in reference to the important events of the time; and public opinion has sometimes

been influenced, not lightly, by these celebrations. Thus is the graduate, splendid in raiment and eloquence, sent out to his work in the world.

The great weakness of the Catholic college system was its lack of a standard, outside of itself and independent of it, to which faculties would have been forced to train their students. We had no Harvard and Yale. Each college had its own standard, of which the main feature was to secure as many students as possible in order to pay expenses. In consequence the variety of standards was confusing. Students were accepted, trained, and dismissed at graduation in all conditions of culture. There was only a mild attempt at uniformity in progress, and often none at all when the losing of a pension came in question. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the results of the whole system were not to be decried, when the circumstances are properly considered. The Christian Brothers introduced their peculiarities of method into the colleges with good effect. As a teaching body their trend may be considered as practical rather than speculative. Their business is to take account of the conditions in which the student is to lead his life, and to arrange the curriculum accordingly. Hence, in their colleges you will find old features disappearing, and the new taking their places in each generation. This is truer of the scientific and commercial courses than of the classical; but even in this department their trend is well illustrated.

More than any other body of teachers with which I am acquainted they train their pupils in that much-neglected art of personal expression, by which boys and youths can use in daily life the accomplishments

gained in study and in development. In their method it is not enough to know mathematics, to compose English, to speak correctly; the student must also possess readiness, self-possession, and speed; and, therefore, his calculations must be quick and sure, his composition suited to instant delivery, and his ability to declaim undoubted. In the class-room they place emphasis on this quality of readiness, and their pupils are trained to make a creditable appearance before a general audience. Naturally, then, in taking up college work they introduced this feature of their training into the classical department with very encouraging results. The art of oratory was cultivated earnestly, and is now one of their American traditions. It was the happy privilege of Brother Azarias, during his administration of the college, to give a stronger impulse to the enthusiastic study of the vernacular, of which he had become so fond a student and admirer. He was but following in the footsteps of the Blessed De La Salle in giving to the native tongue the fullest share of attention and honor.

Such was the character of the institution in which Brother Azarias labored for twenty years, and of which he was now the honored head. It had reached its silver jubilee, and its sons were numerous and friendly. He had charge of a little family respectable in numbers and choice in quality. The field was not large and the limitations were many; but there was opportunity sufficient for a man of his temper.

His work was carried on amid many discouragements, of which ill health was in those days the most serious. Overwork in his youth had injured his lungs, and pneumonia more than once brought him

to the door of death. He had fine vitality, and rallied so regularly after the heaviest sickness as to indulge the hope that he would really live to write a humorous essay on the art of long living. The presidency of the college did not over-weary him, and he was full of strength, of hope, of plans for the future when he made his second visit to Europe in 1886. It was his desire to make the thirty days' retreat among his brethren in France before setting out upon his travels. He had already taken the final vows of his state, vows which bound him forever to the community, unless dispensed by the Pope. He wished to renew in the long retreat the spirit of his vocation and the fervor of his youth before taking up the literary and educational work of his mature years. Circumstances had determined his literary vocation. Critical study of the past for the enlightenment of the present, in the fields of literature and education, seemed to him a proper sphere of activity for a monk of his temper. However, the better and larger part of his work was done when he departed for France in the summer of 1886. The remainder of his life was passed in revising his books and essays, and in producing the volume on ancient schools. It is now opportune to pass to the consideration of his literary achievement, which holds a high and peculiar place in American literature.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HIS FIRST BOOK.

THE disadvantages of the literary worker, whose deepest inspiration is derived from Catholic principles and history, are very great in the United States. Probably no literary circle in the world has cultivated so rigid an exclusiveness, an ignorance so remorseless as the literary circle in America. Its conceit has surpassed its exclusiveness and ignorance, which were in part the birthright of English colonists, the descendants of the Puritans, moulded in that matrix which shut out all interpretations of the past save that of Cranmer and his heirs. Emerson and Lowell were the lights of the American circle, the gods of its little temples, its poets and essayists; two writers who, in their entire career, never had the spirit to look into the Catholic past and discover their debt to the humanity, not to mention the Christianity, of the great men of old. Emerson could jump from Augustine to Swedenborg without a hint of Francis of Assisi and Aquinas; Lowell could dress up the famous incident in the life of St. Martin of Tours, naming it the Vision of Sir Launfal, and get no vision of the world he was ignoring. They could appreciate the conditions of ancient Greece and Rome, and write enthusiastically of the growth of the primitive tribes into states of such magnificence; but the

transformation of their own ancestors from nomadic barbarians into civilized peoples was hidden from their eyes by the notorious fiction of the Dark Ages. For them there was absolutely no good to come out of the Catholic Nazareth. The fault lay in their training and its traditions; but the leaders of the American literary world boasted that under Emerson's leadership they had broken away from those irritating limitations. When they had come to admire Plato, Marcus Aurelius, Swedenborg, and Carlyle, and to class the Christ with the superior philosophers, they considered themselves emancipated; but they were still enslaved to their own littleness, to their earliest prejudices. For them Maitland had written in vain, and the dark shadow of Schopenhauer hid from them the majestic figure of Schlegel.

The manifestations of their ignorance, exclusiveness, and conceit are a little bewildering to us at the close of the century, when Aquinas, Dante, Racine, Bossuet, Fenelon, Pascal, and Newman are common names on the lips of literati of all creeds; when atheists and materialists defend the humanity, and Anglicans and Methodists defend the Christianity, of the Dark Ages; when all agree that the Church of Rome did a mighty work for the inheritors of the Roman Empire and for all mankind, in the mournful but glorious days from Attila to the eighth Boniface. The disciples of Emerson exalted him as the poet of the new life which had burst out of the discarded Puritan shell, and paid court to Bryant as the bard of nature; but Longfellow was the whetstone of their sarcasm and wit. They could not understand, in fact they were enraged with, a poet who found his most



stirring themes in a Catholic past. His "Golden Legend" and "Evangeline," his "Hyperion" and "Spanish Student," the manifold lights of the mediæval day shining in most of his poems, were so many evidences to them of his inefficiency, lack of poetic genius, and infidelity to his time. Margaret Fuller became a shrew in her criticisms of Longfellow.

How changed are all the conditions since the days before the war! The judgments of these little people have all been reversed in the higher courts. Longfellow remains; the beautiful past, which he illumined, in drawing his best inspirations from it, has come again into the light, and Emerson takes his place in the gallery of the gods, as arranged and regulated by the prosaic taste of John Morley. For the rest there is left the charity of silence. Nevertheless, the Emerson following was a powerful clique in its day, and has left its evil mark on the succeeding generations. No Catholic could get a hearing from any court where its officials had power. It professed some kind of toleration, I believe, the kind that could smile and wonder, amid discussions of the Vedas, if the Know-nothings would ever be done murdering the Catholics and burning the convents. It seemed to class what it called the superstition of the Christian with the ferocity of the persecutor. When Brownson became a Catholic its doors were shut upon him. He had simply become impossible. There was no controversy over the affair. Olympus in Boston could not stoop to Hades located in the obscure thing called the Catholic Church.

The position of the New England Transcendentalists was not as impregnable as they imagined. Sev-

eral personages demonstrated the fact many years ago. Archbishop Hughes in New York, Bishop England in Charleston, and Archbishop Spalding in Baltimore, attacked them with the hot shot of controversy; their appeals were backed by liberal quotations from the Protestant and pagan lights of the world, as well as from the teachers of the Church; the Emersonians heard names with which their culture was not acquainted; and perhaps, though they made no sign, their conceit was surprised in its citadel. Brownson and Hecker attacked them unsparingly, for they had been of the same school long enough to measure the master and his disciples. The spiritual-minded head of the Paulist community just stopped short of contempt for Emerson, and had little faith in his sincerity. Yet he did not admire the method employed by Brownson in presenting to him and to the American people the faith of Christ, and the two friends had many a battle over their difference of opinion. The method of Brownson was that of the fathers and theologians in the exposition of dogmatic beliefs and their corollaries to Catholic peoples. He began by assuming the truth, or certain principles common to both parties in a controverted matter. Father Hecker maintained that the American audience to which he appealed was ignorant of his terminology, indifferent to his thesis, and unable to follow out his reasonings, either through lack of interest or through lack of knowledge.

The old mystic advocated a synthesis of all the scattered beliefs, or obscure beliefs, lying in the American social fabric, in human hearts, in political conditions, anywhere, but openly or practically

recognized by Americans; from these he would build up a logical structure suited to the genius of the people; and thus lead them through their own virtues, conditions, sins, into the true temple of God. He carried out the idea in his own methods and writings. The very titles of his books describe the idea: such as "The Aspirations of Nature," "Questions of the Soul" and "The Church and the Spirit of the Age." I heard him say, so many years ago that I cannot vouch for the accuracy of my memory, that Brownson admitted before his death the truth and strength of Hecker's contention, and wished he had employed his method in the presentation of truth. As a matter of fact the great philosopher and publicist did not succeed in penetrating the armor of Emersonian conceit for the Emersonians themselves. They ignored him, and transmitted to their latest disciples a tradition of hostility to him, which shows itself to-day in the perfect ignorance, malicious and carefully cultivated, of the so-called American men of letters, regarding the strongest mind and ablest philosopher which the United States has produced.

It may be imagined that where the controversial bishops, and Brownson and Hecker, had failed to crack the Emersonian shell, Brother Azarias had small chance of success. He was not thinking of trying his lance against the heroes of the hour, being then without self-confidence. Yet had he been specially trained for an attack on the Emersonian camp, he could hardly have chosen more skilful weapons than those contained in the little armory of his first book, which appeared in 1874, and was modestly named "An Essay Contributing to a Philosophy of Litera-

ture." Without challenging a single opponent, he had simply ridden into their own field, and outgeneralled them in their own tactics. For these were the people who had reduced all revelation to the level of literature, and had made humanity the source and the sea for all revelation. For them revelation and literature were not the real things signified by these words, but inventions of the Emersonian cult. They had no real understanding of either revelation or literature, never having studied these tremendous things thoroughly; nor of history and philosophy, with which they had only a passing acquaintance, enough to give an appearance of solidity to their shallow discussions. Suddenly there rides a cavalier into their lists, armed with their own weapons, philosophy and literature. He has united the two, and presents them with a philosophy of literature. His book contains all that they knew of Indian lore, pagan classics, German pessimists, and English atheists. Astounding fact! it also contains venerable names, books, systems, theories, with which they are unacquainted! It makes of literature, their god, a majestic unity, whose history begins with the race and ends with it; and it accounts for every stage of the long journey of time, for each beautiful development, for many of its dark problems; and there is in it no hiatus of the sort which left their knowledge limping, when they tried to get along without the literature of the Christian Church and of the Dark Ages.

It would have been interesting to study the effect of this maiden attempt of Brother Azarias on the original Emersonian crowd; but when the book

appeared most of them were dead or dispersed. Margaret Fuller was gone, Ripley and Dana were in New York journalism, the leader himself was approaching his end apart from the world's great questions. Emerson had fallen into the sere and yellow leaf quite naturally. His career had been a stimulus to many, but the logicians tore it to pieces and the march of events had obscured his influence. His theories of life were nebulous, and simply vanished when the sun of truth or common sense shone on them. He was out of date when the war ended. The world to which he belonged had given up the ghost. Immigration had upheaved New England; war had destroyed the South; the Fathers of the Church, the Middle Ages, and Thomas of Aquin had invaded all things American, in the persons of natives like the first members of the Paulist community, of the bishops Bayley, Wood, Wadhams, of lay converts to the faith everywhere. With his intense love of order and quiet he was glad to live and die far from the clamor of the new arena.

But his admirers and imitators were still to the fore, quoting the Koran and other nice things with infinite relish, and cultivating, as far as the Philistines and the need of bread and butter would permit, the Emersonian exclusiveness. There was still nothing in Nazareth, nothing in Brownson, nothing in Hecker, though Ripley admired him. They read the essay suggesting a philosophy of literature, and were made uneasy in their conceit. It was logical, dispassionate, accurate, spiritual. Here were all the old masters from the nameless teachers of Zoroaster to Lowell, and all the new from Isidore of Seville to Coventry

Patmore! The index alone was a revelation. Every name of ancient or modern times that had won the eminence of authority in science, history, philosophy, and literature, and was pertinent to the questions treated, lighted the simple page; every movement relating to literature and affecting or explaining its course, every book of the like character, was here described. And the evidence was emphatic that the work was no compilation from the encyclopedias, but the genuine production of a well-read scholar, who had revelled in his acquaintance with the best minds of the past. One can imagine that a book of this kind would have broken the phalanx of transcendentalism in 1850 much more easily than the hammers of Spalding and Brownson. It was Father Hecker's idea worked out for the literary world. It challenged the culture and knowledge of Emerson and his disciples. It proved that, however much they knew and however deeply they felt, the circle of knowledge and sentiment was not complete for them while such books could be written.

It may seem that undue importance is attached to the essay by the biographer. It is proper, therefore, to describe the essay briefly, and to mention some facts in the case. When the first edition of the book appeared Brother Azarias was in his twenty-seventh year, and had been teaching and studying a decade. He was a voracious reader, an all-devouring student, with that craze for knowledge which too often overcomes discretion in youth. He read a library from the first volume to the last, a book from the title-page to the last word. He missed nothing and never forgot. His nature was of that simple



and high-pitched quality which is content only with the best in every form of human activity and production. He went straight to the hinge of things, and was forever discontented with the trifles that lay in wait to hinder his advance. Thus in philosophy, no sooner had he got acquainted with its sublimities than he went with speed to Plato and Aristotle, and mastered the Greek that he might read them; next he studied the history of philosophy; and finally he rested upon Augustine and the Schoolmen. So, too, in literature he seized upon the masters at the beginning, and read the minor stars in their great light; and, not content with the mere reading of them, he mastered their history, objective and subjective, the story of the influences which developed them, and of the influences which they exercised, and settled for himself their place in the progress of the human mind.

Again, in the art of teaching he did not rest until he had found the source of modern methods and had skilled himself in their history, their development; brushing aside all temptations to linger here and there, he went straight to the root of each science or question, and accounted to himself at once and forever for its nature and peculiarities. This habit of mind is not common except with the most thorough scholars. In Brother Azarias it explains the depth and richness of the most trifling work of his mind, and the sterling value of his best productions. He began his studies with a hearty devotion to mathematics. Among his fellows in the scholasticate and the class-room were young men of even more brilliant mind than himself, and finer acquirements in different

departments. Some of them are long dead and others have attained eminence as students and professors of rare ability in the highest branches of science. The training and the companionship of these early years were a splendid stimulus to his talent, which was of that well-known cast that must speak to the world or die. In such men the spring of genius and knowledge must run out upon the lands, or shrink and subside in its rocky stronghold. The slow and exhaustive examination of a problem, the careful computation of one set of forces, the careful exclusion of another, the abstraction of the mind from all things but the problem, the deliberate pursuit of its ramifications to solution, and the philosophic acceptance of results, no matter how disappointing and unexpected—these are the methods of the mathematician. All are found in the writings of Brother Azarias, and are conspicuous in the Essay, from the fact, one can suppose, that he was not long out of the algebraic atmosphere when the book was produced. These facts would seem to demand from him, as they certainly explain, the exact method, the sound scholarship, and the rich depths of his earliest writings.

The genesis of the book on a philosophy of literature is interesting, and illustrates well the contention of many thinkers, that our inspirations are no more than the blossoms of secret growth, not meteors from the void, nor Minervas from the rapid brain. In looking over old numbers of the *De La Salle Monthly*, a publication of the time, I found many articles from the pen of Brother Azarias. They treated of literary topics mostly, and bore the titles which are found over certain chapters in the Essay. Thus his prepa-

ration for his first book had begun early. The little articles had only the germs of the ideas afterward so well developed in the Essay; and their author had as yet no thought of the career of author. A brother professor suggested the collection of his essays into a book, thinking them too good to be forgotten, and finding in them a harmony which might easily be converted into unity. Brother Azarias was reading Schlegel's "Philosophy of History" at the time. For this writer he had always the fondest admiration. Fact, suggestion, and example converged in his mind, and the idea of a philosophy of literature was born. It gave direction and unity to his readings at once. He was acquainted in some fashion with the trend of Emerson and his following, and undoubtedly felt some contempt for the learning which displayed so much and knew so little.

It must have delighted him to unearth a theory which, using philosophy and letters as one weapon, would shock the Emersonian towers to the ground. This is precisely the office and the natural result of the Essay, as we shall see a little later. The first edition appeared in 1874 and the latest in 1890. One hundred pages were added in the interval, consisting of new chapters, new sections, incidental paragraphs, and fresh quotations, and a freshening of the style here and there. The book was very favorably received in Catholic circles, but did not call out any enthusiasm. The editors rampant, as usual, forgot its merits to go mad over occasional paragraphs. Brownson praised it for its philosophical method, but did not seem to feel its literary significance. Only the very few seemed able to de-

tect the sweet strength of this new breeze blowing across the literary lands, and freshening the perfumed dead airs that lingered above the dry soil. Surprise was shown mildly that a Christian Brother should soar so high as to stir the tempers of editorial autocrats, and quote authorities that had rarely or never been quoted in America before. Of course these people were not acquainted with the circumstances, and many that had been forgot that Brother Azarias had given up mathematics for philosophy and letters, that for years he had been in training for this work. He taught to his classes Balmes and Barbe in philosophy, and gave them his own interpretations of English literature. He established a college paper in manuscript, called the *Collegian*, which is still published. Besides contributions to the *De La Salle Monthly*, his articles were sent to Catholic magazines and were welcomed; and he wrote much for college occasions, and aided in the production of text-books. Moreover, his teaching was of the living kind, stimulating to himself as to his hearers. It is evident that his reading of Balmes, whom he exhausted, introduced him to Spanish literature; it was the same with Dante and others; probably the exception was with the German, for which he had not the same admiration nor the same zeal. He found his best preparation for authorship in the faithful work of the classroom and the library. Like all Catholic thinkers and readers of that period, he was partly amused, partly indignant over the self-sufficiency of the American literary circle, and lost no opportunity to expose its ignorance and shallowness, both to his classes and to the public. In his first attempts at verse he wrote

some ragged lines on their silly theories, describing them as shivering souls who "sit naked and wan, their hearts with ice-chains bound," crooning strange things to themselves.

I know not if I am, or if I seem to be,  
Fog or sun, dream or day—tis all the same to me.  
I am the fog, or the fog is I—alike are we and one—  
A variegated thread into the web of the absolute spun.

The above paragraphs sufficiently explain the processes by which the Essay grew, and show that, while Brother Azarias wrote as the scholar with his face to all time, he also wrote with particular reference to the times in which he lived; and although we have no precise evidence on the matter, it can fairly be presumed that he appreciated the whole strength of the lance which he was directing against the Emersonians. The task so cleverly undertaken by the young teacher, before he had finished his first quarter of a century, had for its object, as he himself expressed it, "the investigation of the general relations of literature, as the expression of humanity, to the epochs in which society lives and moves, to thought, to language, to industry, art, science, and religion, as each is developed and expressed; and from these relations to deduce the laws that determine its variations, the fundamental principles upon which it is based, and the elements that constitute it. He explains the method followed: "Literature is defined in its most general aspects; its origin and functions are determined; then its general relations are dwelt upon; after which it is considered as influenced and as an influencing agency; and the spirit of rationalism that began to expand in the fif-

teenth, and became more general in the sixteenth century, is investigated in its main stem and chief branches, so far as it has affected literature. A theory of the beautiful, equally applicable to art and letters, is established; in its light the conservative element of literature is expressed, and it is shown that religion fosters and is the permanent basis of literary excellence. Some practical hints, based upon the theory and facts laid down, are given; the problem of intelligence is touched upon, and the morality of literature is discussed."

In this brief paragraph are described fully his thesis and his method. He postulates the existence of God and of Revelation, that man is made in God's image, and that his aspirations are satisfied only on the plane of the supernatural. Thus armed he takes up his novel and interesting task. He defines literature in the opening words of the first chapter as "the verbal expression of man's affections as acted upon in his relations with the material world, society, and his Creator; that expression being as varied as the moods that pass over his soul, whether they speak of love or hatred, of joy or sorrow, of fear or hope." Examining his own definition he arrives at the conclusion that "we may infer that a law of progress and of limitations runs through the history of all literature, and that literature varies in its ends according to the degree of civilization embodied in the manners, customs, and modes of thinking of the people to whom it appeals." And he quotes in support of his reasonings Monsignor Corcoran, Émile Souvestre, and the poet Terence, with illustrations from Dickens, Thackeray, Longfellow, Tenny-



son, and St. Augustine. He finds the function of literature to be the interpreting of man's emotions to himself, the evoking of ideas from the human mind so prone to grow sluggish, the fostering of man's love for the ideal, and the satisfying in part of the aspirations toward the ideal; he shows how incapable literature is fully to satisfy this craving of mankind, because it is the creature of man; so that religion alone can satiate his longing for the spiritual.

The origin of literature is described in a chapter which well illustrates the extent of his reading, and explains the surprise of a friend at the authorities he quoted. Spencer, Darwin, and John Fiske are representatives of the side which he opposes; Balmes, Wiseman, and Max Müller support his own contentions; a company of writers is brought forward to maintain his statements on the origin of the alphabet, architecture, language, and ancient conditions in China and Egypt, on Chinese writing, the Phœnician alphabet, the ancient theatre, the Veda, and the Bible. The actual number is twenty-three, and their special treatises are named on the different subjects for which they were quoted. In the relation of literature to language he describes the accepted theories of the day, making the point against his opponents that the Aryan intellect submitted to the authority of the Bible, though the genius of the Aryan and Semitic peoples was strongly at variance. Architecture he found to be symbolical of an epoch, a statement proved by descriptions of ancient nations and times; and he passed judgment on the literary ideals of this day by showing the patchwork character of its architecture. "Thus we find that our age is in

literature what it is in architecture—an age of comparative study, and in consequence an age of patchwork and reconstruction.” He enunciates a law governing the development of literary epochs, such as the age of Pericles, the age of Augustus, and the age of Elizabeth: “When a nation has grown to maturity and arrived at the pinnacle of her prosperity, she possesses a strong sense of security, and devotes herself to peaceful pursuits, especially to literature and architecture, and gives utterance to her thoughts in language strong, clear, effective, such as becomes her maturity and dignity.” This law is illustrated not only by descriptions of the periods named above, but also of the age of Louis XIV. and of Vikramaditya, with added explanations of Roman conditions as an exception to the law. He closes the first part of the book with a remarkable review of the influencing agencies in literature, going over the entire ground from the first dawn of letters in the East to its sunset glories in the Renaissance.

The Emersonians found their most vulnerable point laid bare in this section of the book. Having turned their backs upon the Christ of the Gospels, they were forced to discredit historic Christianity and to take up with the neo-Platonists, and other erratics who might bridge for them the great gap from Marcus Aurelius to Luther, Dante being accepted as one of the arches. All literary activity in the interval was not considered worthy of notice. The schools of Alexandria, the minor poets of the court and the catacomb, the early Fathers and the later Schoolmen, the mystics, even the progenitors of the Lutheran movement, were cheerfully ignored. Emerson seems

never to have known them, any more than he knew the Catholic Church in America, though it had assumed distinct proportions before he died. His disciples had caught glimpses and heard legends of the jewels stored away in the mines of these forgotten ages; but until this American book flung its trumpet note at them, they had no misgivings. It did not teach them discretion, for the rank and file persist in remaining nearly as ignorant as of yore; but it taught them that history had the defence of the Dark Ages in its hands. They have been more or less prepared for the deluge which will drown them all, and of which Brother Azarias' sober Essay was the first tide. Having introduced them to the influencing agencies in literature, he proceeds in the succeeding eight chapters to analyze the forces let loose upon the world by Luther, Lord Bacon, Comte, Spencer, Hegel, and Schopenhauer, six thinkers who are the special delight of the Emersonian school. His treatment of the questions put forward by these men is dispassionate. He writes like a man of letters, not a controversialist. He describes the principles upon which he condemns them all without a trace of rancor. What is right in their contentions he praises; what is extravagant in their critics he cuts away that the truth may be seen. The sum of their errors, the evil results of their teachings, the limitations of their best principles, are presented with the calmness of the surgeon, who is not surprised at the morbid growths removed by his knife. Everywhere Catholic truth is presented, side by side with these vagaries of the school, as a matter of course, as the solvent which dissipates each form of error, as the his-

toric force with which readers must certainly be acquainted.

Having considered literature in its various relations, he proceeds to the study of its intrinsic value, its nature, the elements of its power; he then passes to the consideration of the conservative principle in literature, and closes the dissertation with an acute analysis of the religious basis of literature. These three chapters display the closest and most difficult reasoning in the Essay, and particularly awoke the admiration of Brownson. In them he establishes his theory of the beautiful. He finds the beautiful to be "the expression of the word. From one Word are all things, and this one all things speak. The splendor of that Word it is that we admire in the glowing sunset; that steals into our souls in the lovely landscape; that, beaming from the truly beautiful countenance, inspires awe and respect; that elicits the burst of admiration on witnessing the heroic deed." He finds the conservative principle of literature to be the ideal. "A literary production is entitled to be considered a classic in proportion as it fittingly expresses the ideal as conceived by an age or nation. This law supplies a safe canon by which to determine, at least approximately, the classic merit of a literary work." Literature without a religious basis, in his opinion, will prove abortive. It will give a false direction to education, and, in its misapprehension of the ideal, it will ignore the infinite, circumscribe itself in the finite, and live content in the expression of the tangible, the sensuous, and the material. Flashes of great thought may sometimes shine forth in it, but only as reminiscences of literatures that have been in-

spired by religion. Finally the Essay is completed by three chapters on the qualifications of the literary artist and the literary critic, and a summary of the different theses maintained in the course of the volume.

The modest Essay is the finest piece of criticism offered to the world by the literary circle of the United States, and the only thing of its kind in the English language. Had it come from the pen of Ripley or Whipple or Margaret Fuller its shrine would have long ago been erected and its ritual established. The net results of American literary criticism, I fear, are mouldy pages, bookworms, and dust. The successors of the vigorous but erratic critics of the past are not navigators of the literary ocean, but children sailing yachts in a park pond. Beside the best achievements of the professional critics of this country, the sum of sound learning, clear thinking, generous views, impartial statement, and other good qualities in the Essay is somewhat overwhelming. And yet it is a limited book, much below what its author desired to make it, could have made it, had his years been more and his modesty less, or had he experience of the world. Four volumes of the size of the Essay's single book would have given fair expression to his idea. As it is, many of the chapters are too short for his purpose, and the condensation practised really injured the important details of the plan. Its reception by the thinkers was very quiet, since the author was a Catholic and a Christian monk. Praise was pitched in a low key on the supposition that the Essay was a direct plea for the Catholic Church. Moreover, literary studies in this country

had no such horizon as appeared in the book, the central idea also seemed strange, and, in consequence, the professional critics were at loss to know if the production was scientific or critical. In simpler words, it was beyond their capacity. Though it stirred no depths at first, its seven editions since 1874 are silent testimony to the impression it made. The invitations extended to Brother Azarias to lecture before non-Catholic bodies were inspired by admiration of the Essay. Within a few years its popularity has increased among all classes. To me it seems destined to hold a very high place in the literature of criticism, when the American writer has finally shaken himself free of the Puritan shell, and can look at literary questions without Spencer's spectacles.



## CHAPTER X.

### BOOKS ON PHILOSOPHY AND LETTERS.

THE encouragement given to Brother Azarias by discerning readers of his first book, and the favorable reception of the Essay by the critics, urged him to take up a literary career in earnest. Brownson's praise of his philosophy, Mgr. Corcoran's hearty tribute to the general merits of the book, and the judicious commendation of strangers who admired the learning and the thesis of the author, gave him self-confidence. From that time his work assumed greater steadiness and smoothness of tone, and he wrote with the directness of "one having power." He had passed from the study of mathematics to the ardent pursuit of mental philosophy. According to his habit he read everything to be got bearing on the subject, and in a few years his acquaintance with the history of philosophic thought, with the great writers in philosophy, with the workings of true and false philosophy in the present social order, became extensive and accurate. The next and natural step for him was to give out his thought to others. He prepared a few articles for the reviews on philosophic questions, and treated his themes with sufficient clearness and ability to arouse the capable critics. The most important of his studies in this science was a review of the relations held by Christian schools and scholars

to the philosophy of Aristotle in the Middle Ages. Very much as the essay on a philosophy of literature summed up his knowledge and illustrated his methods in the field of letters, so the essay on Aristotle provided readers with a clear idea of his attainments, and a good illustration of his methods, in the field of philosophy. It was also a surprise to the learned and the average readers. The theme sounded historical, such as an ordinary student of philosophy might handle without severe preparation; but examination showed that the author had to possess considerable acquaintance with philosophy as well as history, and history of no ordinary kind, to discuss his thesis with intelligence and profit. In a word, it was an essay for the learned, far beyond any but the well-read in philosophic thought.

The subject seems a curious one for an American writer to select. It looks like a very ancient and inapposite theme. Moreover, it was to be read first at a summer gathering of cultured non-Catholics, who devoted much of their time to philosophy. Nevertheless, the topic and the selection of it for the occasion were not accidents. Brother Azarias was a sincere lover of the Grecian thinker, of his master Plato, and studied their work with interest. Plato he admired more because of the nobility of his thought and the generosity of his sentiment. Aristotle he revered for the mighty strength and hardness of his mind, which had built up an edifice never to be pulled down by the hands of men. These two philosophers stirred him to fluency in conversation before any other writers save St. Thomas Aquinas and Dante. He made one the standard of his thought,

the other the model of his method. All that history had written or inferred about them he knew. Out of pure affection he had followed the course of Aristotle's influence through all its fortunes down to the present time, and almost before he was aware the subject-matter of his book on the Stagyrte lay in his hands. It was an easy matter to throw it into shape and read it to the friends who had invited his co-operation. For them there was nothing inappropriate in the topic of Aristotle's philosophy, even in its relation to schools and scholars of a Catholic age. There was a spice of interest in the apparently ancient theme; for it had often been charged that the Catholic Church, in its hatred and fear of knowledge, had done its best to destroy the Greek, and to replace him with one of its own creatures. The charge was more easily made than answered, and had become as common as the story of the chained Bible released by Luther. Thus, the lover of Aristotle, in doing his master a service, utilized his own knowledge of a special question, destroyed a popular lie for his audience, and gave them a clearer view of the Church so systematically calumniated to them. In addition, he shed some light on the dark places of their philosophy, a light of which they had and have very great need. There is no study, after religion, so confused and helpless in this country as philosophy.

He begins with a few paragraphs on the general attitude of the Christian Church to philosophy and its systems. Her business being to regenerate the world, she is not a school of philosophy, and is bound by no system. Her children are permitted to explain her doctrines in the light of philosophic

truth, if they are able, but her mission does not depend upon such explanations. In defining and affirming her doctrines she adopts from time to time some term from the prevailing philosophic school, and in her simple catechism uses philosophic language to describe the nature of the Sacraments. Justin Martyr, her apologist, is a disciple of Plato, and Athenagoras leans upon both Plato and Aristotle in his defence of her teachings. Clement and Origen gather into a single focus the rays of truth which they find in all systems, and turn them to the use of the Church. The pseudo-Dionysius abounds in imitations of Plotinus and Proclus. The neo-Platonic philosophy, whose founders intended it as a weapon against Christianity, is used by a host of writers in every age, from John of Damascus to St. Thomas of Aquin, in defence of Christian doctrine. St. John the Evangelist himself finds a place in the noblest passage of his gospel for that term, the Word, which had so entranced the philosophic mind in his day, and had stood for so much in the philosophic expression of earlier times: "Whatever there is of the good, or the true, or the beautiful; whatever tends to bring home to a people's heart her sublime teachings; whatever appeal to man's highest reason, and satisfies his noblest aspirations, she [the Church] absorbs and assimilates and presents for his contemplation, blessed and purified and consecrated as an instrument of holiness. There is no truth too elevated for her grasp; there is no detail too trivial to be beneath her notice, if it can only avail for the main purpose."

In this way he prepares his readers to grasp the spirit in which the Church approaches the philos-

opher and his system. It is the Christian Boëthius who introduces Aristotle to the students of the West, and it is the defenders of the true Christian faith that are won to the great thinker by the superiority of his methods, while its impugnors, conscious and innocent, reject him, attack him, and do their little utmost to degrade him forever. The Humanists turn from him to Plato, as the smoother and more polished writer. The Reformers find him too identified with Catholic dogma in their time to make use of him. "If Aristotle had not been of flesh," says Luther, "I would not hesitate to affirm him to have been truly a devil." But through Melancthon's intercession he refrained from condemning the *Dialectics*. Bacon and Descartes, each in his own way, directed their energies to his overthrow in order the more securely to found their own systems. Their successors neglected him. And the teachers who most neglected him have been loudest in the declaration that the Church, which found such help in him, out of hatred of knowledge had condemned him! These are the facts which Brother Azarias cleverly displays as the introduction to his essay, closing the part with a comparison of Plato the master, and Aristotle the disciple: "Plato was governed by an enthusiasm that lit up his soul and revealed to him the highest and noblest regions of ideal thought and emotion; Aristotle looked at the cold facts in the case, dissected every element of thought and expression with the coolness of the surgeon handling the scalpel, and set down his observations in the driest and baldest manner. . . the real position of Aristotle's philosophy in the history of thought is that it stands out from the philosophy of

Plato, not as a mere contradiction to that philosophy, but as completing and perfecting it, and supplying its shortcomings. He laid hold of the laws of thought and made of them a science."

The course of Aristotle's philosophy next engages his attention, and he follows it through the schools of the East and West, giving a noble chapter to the Arabian school, whose commentaries of the Stagyrte led to the great struggle described and explained in the work of Brother Azarias. Here he meets his thesis face to face, and states his task to his hearers. The Arabic disciple of Aristotle was Averroes, called emphatically in the thirteenth century the Commentator. "Through him all the errors of Arabian philosophy are transplanted within the very shadow of the Church, and together with those of Aristotle produce a plentiful harvest of disputes, criminations, and unchristian doctrines. It will be our task to trace their growth and influence through the varying fortunes of the master-mind of both Christian and Arab." It can be seen from this statement what a sense of mastery over his subject Brother Azarias had acquired. The task of dealing with special doctrines of three such minds as Aristotle, Thomas of Aquin, and Averroes, in reviewing and explaining the true relations of Aristotle to the Church, is not a light one for the specialist in philosophy. The man who assumed the task for an American audience had the keenest sense of its difficulty. "In considering the attitude of the Church toward the Stagyrte, in the varying phases of his fortune during the two following centuries (from 1200 to 1400), we find ourselves constructing one of the most delicate and critical chap-



ters in the annals of the human intellect. It is a subject that has been ill-understood. Enemies of the Church have misrepresented her action in the matter; her friends have indulged in lame excuses and abject apologies for which she has neither recognition nor thanks. A simple statement of facts from documents which it is our privilege to use will show that both aspersion and apology are uncalled for."

The statement of facts is an account of the struggle over the Aristotelian philosophy, which lasted for a century and a half, and involved the University of Paris, the bishops, and the Pope in a series of heart-breaking controversies. The source of the troubles lay in the Commentaries of Averroes. He had paraphrased, epitomized, and commented Aristotle, until the schools became enamored of him and his great master. Unfortunately, his commentary was not of a reliable character, for Renan describes it as "a Latin translation of a Hebrew translation of a commentary made upon an Arabic translation of a Syriac translation of a Greek text." Here was surely a mare's nest. Such it proved for the quarrelsome disputants of the time. Aristotle in this disguise was studied blindly, and intoxicated students and masters. A new era was supposed to have come upon earth, and rationalism made a fresh bid for public favor. A provincial council condemned certain teachers, and the books of Aristotle upon which they founded their doctrines. A papal legate drove out of the University all but the *Dialectics*, the *Ethics*, and four books of the *Topics* of the Stagyrice. These measures had no result but to enrage the mob of irresponsible teachers,

who left their theses to attack doctrines, dogmas, sacraments, and mysteries, declaring that Aristotle had brought all mysteries within the limits of the human understanding. A Pope rebuked these disputants and appointed a commission to examine the current works of Aristotle, and to correct them. The greatest students of the time were invited to take up the study of the Greek philosopher, and to correct the editions of his works, or guard against his errors by their commentaries. This process went on for a century, engaging Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, and Bonaventure, with other great minds, until the schools were put in possession of the true Aristotle, and the legates of Pope Urban V., deputed to reform the University in 1366, could make obligatory on all graduates the study of his Logic and Psychology, on aspirants for the degree of Master the study of his Physics, Metaphysics, Ethics, and minor works. With this measure the struggle ended. The Church had fought rationalism, not the Stagyrite, and had conquered. The rationalists had used Aristotle, interpreted and mangled by Averroes, as their weapon. The Church through her great scholars gave to Europe the true Aristotle and disarmed her enemies. Brother Azarias sums up the matter in these words: "The Arab and the Jew brought Aristotle to the door of the schoolmen, placed him in their hands, and attempted in his name, with weapons forged in his workshop, to overthrow the doctrines and dogmas of the Church. The schoolmen also forged weapons in the same workshop, and with them made a scientific defence of the Church, struggled against the inroads of Arab and Jew for centuries, and routed them as

completely from the field as did the Castilian phalanx from the Spanish soil. And when the genius of painting represents St. Thomas in a halo of light emanating from the Godhead and reflected from the writings of Moses, the Evangelists, and St. Paul, on the one hand, and on the other from those of Plato and Aristotle, Averroes beneath him in an agony of confusion, his great Commentary overturned and transfixed to earth by a ray from the saint's writings, it but concentrates and epitomizes the contest between the intellectual forces of Christendom and rationalistic Mohammedanism."

The final effort of Brother Azarias is to prove that the schoolmen did not become servile imitators of Aristotle, as has been charged, but, while taking the literal form of his philosophy, gave it new sense. "They breathed into the dry bones, that passed down to them among the wrecks of other civilizations, and forthwith the dry bones became a thing of life." To illustrate this statement he makes a long and vivid comparison between the teachings of Aristotle and St. Thomas in metaphysics, psychology, and ethics. It is a superior piece of literary and philosophical work. No mere novice could either handle or read it with satisfaction. The conception of God and of the human soul as described by the two thinkers forms the subject of the chapter, and the grandeur of both teachers is made equally clear with the superiority of the Angel of the Schools. It is not to be wondered at that the critics of the time found the book stimulating reading. One said: "Few works on philosophy in the English language have we read with so much satisfaction." Another finds the style fascinat-

ing, and knows "of no such luminous treatment of the Saracenic intellectual movement in Spain, its method, results, and limitations, as that which the author gives. . . . It is a most wholesome corrective of Draper in his 'Intellectual Development of Europe,' and is an honest piece of literary work, since the author gives references and authorities, . . . a most delightful pocket-piece of enjoyment for those who revel in high thinking. . . . We recognize in the scholar and thinker behind the name a true member of the philosophic fraternity." There were few professional critics of a culture capable of appreciating the merits of the work and the capacity of the author; and perhaps, also, the readers sufficiently well-informed to see its power were not numerous. It never attained the popularity of his other books, but as a testimony to his culture and an aid to the comprehending of a vexed question, it is a striking contribution to the best books of the time. Certainly it opened the eyes of scholars to the learning of one man, and to the possibilities of research in one department.

It did not by any means exhaust the store of knowledge which Brother Azarias possessed on philosophical questions, nor express fully the quality of his powers. In two essays, published in the reviews of the period, he made it clear that the heights of philosophic science were his familiar ground, and that he had determined upon a work which would make an original contribution to the sum of first principles. The first of these essays was a study of the nature and synthetic principle of philosophy, and the second a powerful sequel to it discussing the symbolism of the Cosmos. He entered the field with the

very first teachers in philosophic science, and discussed candidly the principles which they had presented in their greatest works as the basis of philosophy. More than that, he made a noble attempt to supplement their work with his own; to give to philosophy a principle which would account, as no other has, for its aims and methods. How far the good Brother succeeded in his attempt I must leave it to the philosophers to say. He states the first principle of philosophy thus: "God actualizes Cosmos by the Word, and completes its end in the Word." Of this formula he declares that "it embodies the natural and supernatural elements of philosophy—that which is of reason as well as that which is of revelation—in their proper order and relation."

What his principle signifies he was at pains to explain in his second philosophical essay of importance, the "Symbolism of the Cosmos." There is no need to describe or analyze it here, since it is only an amplification of the principle mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Its chief value to the reader of his life-story will probably lie in the evidences which it provides of his literary genius, his imaginative power and grace of style. Here is one selection: "Everything in life and literature, in art and science, is significant of something beyond that revealed by the actual impression. He who rests content with the smoothness and finish of the marble statue, or with the mere sound of the musical chord, or with the brilliancy of the colors on the pictured canvas, and perceives nothing more than a form, a note, a ray of light, mistakes the source and aim of art. The same is true of him who would gauge the meaning of life

by its material pursuits." Again: "Nor is active life less symbolical. In its individual growth and development, in its personal trials and triumphs, it is significant of something beyond; it is a preparation; it is the composing of a harmonious masterpiece which is to resound through all eternity; it is the carving of a grand statue with which to adorn the great Hereafter; it is the writing of a thrilling epic in which the spiritual warfare and progress of a soul will figure with undying interest. In time, only the rough materials are visible to us; we but witness the uncouth block, the blacked and scored music, the scribbled and fragmentary epic; but when the angel of death comes, unless we have been too indolent at our work, and left too much undone, he will illuminate the scroll, recite the poem, intone the sweet chords of harmony we have spun together, finish the statue; and then, when the veil will have dropped from our eyes, we shall behold the import of all the mysteries of life." His incursion into the domain of philosophic thought did not please some of his critics. Their rough comments may not have affected his intentions in any way, but the idea of a philosophic work was not carried out. Instead he turned to pure literary criticism, and from that drifted into the study of education in its principles and methods. It is probable he would here have found his richest opportunity had death not claimed him.

There is no honester piece of literary work on early English literature than that which was printed by the Appletons in 1879 under the title "The Development of English Literature," and whose latest edition was renamed "Old English Thought." The motto on the



title-page is a quotation from Venerable Bede, which fully expresses the sound, sweet nature of Brother Azarias, as it did of its author: "I ever held it sweet either to learn, to teach, or to write." This little volume is no larger than the ordinary text-book on the subject, and was the first of three volumes projected by the author, in which the whole field of English letters was to have been covered. The need of the work has been felt for some generations by all Catholics, who know the natural or acquired incapacity of most English and American thinkers for an honest translation to the printed page of histories Catholic. Each critic has his particular axe to grind, and truth gets the worst of it. By the side of their ponderous volumes the little book of Brother Azarias looks insignificant. It has been taken by many as a mere book of information for the ignorant, a text-book for boys, owing to its modest size and appearance. It is a text-book, indeed, but of the noblest proportions. A capable critic said of its author that he had "a notable faculty of writing only good books"; and of his work that for "its matter he goes beyond the material usually called literary, and, with a far more trustworthy method and spirit than Taine's, seeks to know the sources whence the literature of the English people derives its tone and coloring. He looks into ancestors, soil, climate, nationalities separate and mixed, creeds old and new, the environment of Caedmon, Cynewulf, Beda, Alfred and others. He studies the great literary centres of Britain, and very properly leaves his theme at the millennial century. The book forms a capital introduction to a course of reading in English literature. There are two hundred pages of

well packed, smoothly mosaicked text, in which are the brilliantly laid clippings from mighty tomes, which none but patient delvers in the quarries read and ponder." The author tells us in his preface that he "laid every available source of information under contribution. Dry land-grants, antiquated law-codes, the decrees of councils, the lives of saints, legend and history, the researches of scholar and critic and antiquarian, have all of them directly and indirectly been brought to bear upon the subject and have been made use of to throw light upon the purely literary document." Text-books are not usually written after this method and in this spirit. Were it so, the common school would escape its present office of disseminating error born of factional hate and the haste of the incapable.

The book consists of an introduction and eight essays. The principles upon which the book is written are described in the exordium. The history of a people's literature is inseparable from that of a people's life. Therefore the sources of literary thought and expression must be found in the common life of the nation. To Brother Azarias the people are more than their writers, whom they produce, to whom they are afterward so much indebted; and he first seeks among the people the influences which produced the singer and the teacher, before he studies the song or the lesson. The canon of criticism by which he is guided is thus stated: "Part of a people's literature is common to the human race; another part is common to the family of races to which the people belongs; still another part is peculiar to one or other of these races, and borrowed from them; the residue

is the people's own. And of this residue a portion is impersonal, and belongs to the age in which it is expressed; the remainder is personal, and peculiar to the individual." In three pages of terse and luminous English he places before the reader the character of the task. His treatment of it fully justifies the praise of the critics. We are all accustomed to the disjointed paragraphs of the ordinary text-book, to its dry details, to its disproportion, to its numerous absurdities. In comparison with them the smoothness of this scientific work is celestial. It demonstrates the uselessness of the patchwork text-book, proving how artistic both in style and proportion any book can be made if the author be capable.

The first chapter leads the reader into the heart and home of the race which forms the root of the modern English nation; as if a modern Strabo, traveller and student, were the guide who brought us face to face with these ancient people. Their home-life and its simple pleasures, the song and the story which pleased the idle hours, their thoughts on their own origin and destiny, their rough activities, are given to us as by an eye-witness. To use the author's own words, we dive into their thoughts, measure the beating of their hearts, contemplate the germs of great modern institutions, and watch the influences which are at work to mould them for a great part in history. It is a pleasant study, more like romance than pure learning. The second chapter describes the leavening of the old English mass by the genius of the Celt, that genius whose master-trait in literature is the expression of sentiment; and "this expression inwoven with color, and form, and love for nature, and suscepti-

bility to its charms, in a style and with a method that please and delight." The critics became enthusiastic over his treatment of this subject. He drew upon the legends of the early Celtic time to give color to the page, and certainly they lent it a charm inexpressible. But no part of the book so drew out the powers of Brother Azarias as the two chapters which describe the surrender of the Britons to Christ, their acceptance of the spiritual yoke of Rome, that city whose pagan rulers were so hated of them, and the glorious labors of Caedmon in giving literary form to the new spirit in the English land.

No writer in English literature has left us a picture so vivid, so exact, so noble as this of Caedmon from the hand of his warmest admirer, Brother Azarias. He half believes the legends of the common people regarding this heavenly singer, who first freed the ancient English tongue from its pagan indecencies and bent it to the praise of Christ. Caedmon is the meridian of his book, and the sun of interest rests there in fullest glory. The preceding chapters but pave the way of light to him, and the chapters which follow are devoted to the description of his influence upon the writers of the old English school, and upon the early literature of Europe. It is impossible to read his study of this ancient poet, whose charm is gone for us, without feeling the most intense desire for a personal acquaintance with his poetry. Caedmon was an illustration of Brother Azarias' theory, as expressed in his philosophy of literature, that there are plastic moments in a people's literature, moments when all things are in a transition state, ready for that genius who will seize the shifting forms of language

and make them models of beautiful and vigorous expression. With Dante and Shakespeare in this respect he classes Caedmon the monk of Whitby. There is a personal element in this fine study of old English thought, which gives a peculiar brightness and precision to its pages. The people, their centres of population, their great writers, and the friends of these writers, aids to the development of their genius, are pictured in brief, well-colored paragraphs. There seems to be no condensation. Exquisite legends, suggestive quotations, extracts that give the key to a work, ornament the leisurely chapters. There is no hurry, no incompleteness. A perfect picture is before you, whose details are worked out with the fidelity of the old monks of the scriptorium in illuminating a manuscript. Only a true artist, a master of his subject, could produce a finished picture in so small a space, and leave such an impression of completeness on the mind. It causes a poignant regret that he did not have time to send forth the companion pictures before his death. What a study he would have given us of the Elizabethan age, and of its wondrous mind, its great mystery, Shakespeare! With his philosophic training and knowledge how many artificial reputations of the modern time would he have punctured! There is no book more deeply religious in spirit and expression than "Old English Thought," and yet it does not contain a controversial page. One critic could only find a trace of "ultra-Roman allegiance" in its pure stream. The force of Catholic truth needed no controversy to display its power. Caedmon, monk, true poet, disciple of Christ, lover of man, is church, teacher, doctrine, and spirit in one.



BROTHER AZARIAS IN HIS STUDY





## CHAPTER XI.

### PHASES OF THOUGHT AND CRITICISM.

Two years before his death Brother Azarias gathered into one volume a number of essays which had been written on various occasions within the preceding decade, and sent them into the world as "Phases of Thought and Criticism." His work was ever carried on along similar lines of thought, the philosophical, literary, and educational chiefly; so that it was not a difficult matter to find unity as well as harmony in a group of his essays published at long intervals. The marrow of the book, the backbone of its entire structure, is an essay on the cultivation of the spiritual sense. Toward this all the lines of thought converge as to a centre; and the author has so divided the parts of the essay among the various chapters that it is rather difficult to get its original proportions from an examination of the book. Thus the opening paragraphs are taken from the first part of the original essay, and make a good introductory chapter. From the essay on thinking has been taken the contrast of Newman and Emerson to form a chapter by itself. The same has been done with the critique on the "Imitation of Christ," which once formed part of the essay on the spiritual sense. The other chapters were first published in the magazines and reviews, as in fact was the case with the greater part of his literary work. He increased the size of some and diminished that

of others, linking the separate chains of harmony until the whole formed one composition of different movements, but pitched in the same key.

Like all his other books, it was a novelty for the American literary world, both in its plan and expression. Not only was the voice new and fresh, but the message which it delivered had a purity and loftiness of character, an energy and originality to which American criticism had long been a stranger. Brother Azarias was more than modest in the statement of his views, and very considerate of others' feelings. He had nothing to say of the critics and the criticism of his time directly, but conveyed his opinions in impersonal remarks, which might fit any age or school as well as that with which he had dealings. Thus, in the preface to the "Phases" he writes two closing sentences. "The criticism that busies itself solely with the literary form is superficial. For food it gives husks." It was his only reference to the criticism of the period, although he knew well that his book must be taken as a pretty comprehensive indictment of the methods and principles and culture peculiar to the critics who sat in judgment on the times. I have not been able to find in the numerous notices of his book that the critics regarded his book in this light. His was the first strong book of criticism sent out from the Catholic side of the literary house. We had had much transient exposition of principles and analysis of popular writings, but they disappeared with the occasion of their production. Many clever and learned men had written worthy dissertations for the general readers, but only the Catholics read them.

His claim to remarkable excellence in the studies of philosophy and letters has been amply proved by his books on these subjects. That he did not suffer from the limitations of his non-Catholic compeers is evident from one undisputed fact: that they know little or nothing of the Catholic thought of the world. For them the thinkers, the teachers, the writers, the poets and philosophers, who lead and teach the Catholic millions in this day, are little better than fictions. Not only is the present Catholic world in all its departments of activity closed to them in fact, it is also closed to them by that ingrained prejudice which does not permit even a look toward the Catholic camp unless its Pope flings a message at their heads. Still more, the modern conspiracy—against Catholic truth—of history, philosophy, science, and letters, as non-Catholics study these things, has built up between them and the Catholic past such a wall as only Heaven itself can bring down. They know nothing of the ages of faith but the grotesque and the horrible. The lights which a few truth-lovers have turned on these early times are still too feeble to lead them out of their favorite darkness. It was an easy matter for Brother Azarias, as it is for any accomplished Catholic critic, to surpass his brother writers in the mere freedom from embarrassing limitations. He knew his own principles, the history of his own household well; and, in addition, he was doubly acquainted with theirs—both from their own accounts, from their theory of Catholic conditions, and from his own study of the non-Catholic position in the light of Catholic principle. It is a real tribute to his generosity of character that he could check the laugh or

the sneer which rises almost irresistibly when we have to deal with the ignorance or the prejudice of our non-Catholic brethren. It is pitiful to be blind, but irritating that those with the gift of sight will not see.

This simple fact, that Brother Azarias knew the entire world of letters and science, both Catholic and non-Catholic, accounts for his superiority as a teacher. As a critic, one can imagine that he had no rivals in the American field so far as the point of view and his own fitness were concerned. It can be doubted if such an art as that of criticism exists in the United States. Certainly one would hardly care to risk a good reputation for taste and judgment by calling the mass of magazine reviews scientific criticism, or æsthetic, or even competent. There have been no reputations made in the field of criticism by American men of letters. There is no authority at present occupying the bench in the literary court whose decisions carry real weight, whose capacity is beyond question, whose acquirements are equal to the needs of his office. The reviews of Brother Azarias' books, by such critics as thought it worth while to examine them are marked by an amusing sense of astonishment, more difficult to conceal than the evident inability to measure the value of his books by any known standard. Perhaps there was no existing standard by which to measure them.

In fact the art of criticism, like its sister arts, bears the marks of the period. It is patchy, without basic principles, ragged, often incompetent, and not rarely dishonest. This latter quality is markedly prominent in England and the United States, where studies

have been less profound, and the spirit of investigation less impartial, than on the continent of Europe. Thus, one of our most ambitious writers, Dräper, in his "Intellectual Development of Europe," a book considered extremely remarkable by Lecky, gives a shining example of dishonesty and recklessness by his review of the "Imitation of Christ." "Its quick celebrity," he tells us, "is a proof how profoundly ecclesiastical influence had been affected, for its essential intention was to enable the pious to cultivate their devotional feelings without the intervention of the clergy. . . . The celebrity of this book was rather dependent on a profound distrust everywhere felt in the clergy both as regards morals and intellect."

This gratuitous assertion receives a flat contradiction from the book itself, and from the German Protestant Ullmann in discussing Thomas à Kempis in this same relation. The author of the "Imitation" was himself a noble priest, and writes thus of his own office: "Great is the dignity of priests, to whom that is given which is not granted to angels; for priests alone, rightly ordained in the Church, have power to celebrate and consecrate the Body of Christ. . . . When a priest celebrates, he honors God, he rejoices the angels, he edifies the Church, he obtains rest for the dead, he helps the living, and makes himself partaker of all good things." Ullmann declares that Thomas à Kempis "recognizes the existing hierarchy and ecclesiastical constitution in their whole extent, together with the priesthood in its function of mediating between God and man, and . . . on every occasion insists upon ecclesiastical obedience as one of the greatest virtues." Draper could not resist the



force of that current upon which he floated, and discredits his acumen as a critic for the sake of a fling at the Catholic Church. This was dishonesty, for no one doubts Draper's capacity, however much his competency be doubted. Thus Brother Azarias wrote of him. The incident fairly illustrates the condition of the American critic, and the character of his criticism. At each moment capable readers are astonished by his puerilities, his amazing comfort in his own incapacity.

What a contrast to this spirit and method does the "Phases and Thought of Criticism" offer. Only in their treatment of Grecian and Roman themes do our reputable critics display the calmness, dignity, and impartiality which Brother Azarias brought to themes of the modern time. Topics which usually awaken the hidden prejudices of writers, aroused in this monk no display of feeling. The spiritual sense, its nature and use, being his theme, he lays down his principles in the opening chapter. In the immortal soul of man he finds a fourfold activity, whose characteristics are summed up in the terms reason, or the illative sense, the moral sense, the æsthetic sense, and the spiritual sense. The first is nourished by intellectual truth, the second is exercised by the continuous choosing between right and wrong, the third is cultivated by correcting and refining the taste for the sublime and the beautiful, and the fourth is fostered by the spirit of piety and devotion. Over all rules the human will. There must be equal development of the four activities, if man is to achieve his destiny rightly. The object of reason is truth, of the moral sense, goodness, and of the æsthetic

sense, beauty, whether in the physical, moral, or intellectual order; but the spiritual sense takes in all the truth, goodness, and beauty of both the natural and revealed orders and views them in the light of faith.

He devotes the second chapter to the reason, and gives suggestive paragraphs on thinking; but he seems most concerned with hearty denunciation of mental lethargy as displayed in routine thinking, teaching, and studying. Its evil effects he traces in the schools, in art, and in politics. He had a grave distrust of schools, whether in philosophy, science, art, or letters. Placing their principles side by side, he finds contradiction enough to create chaos; Ruskin talks thousands into a factitious taste for art, and the critics praise the meaningless rhapsodies of admired poets. He would have all men for whom education has done something exercise their thinking powers on the matters with which their lives are concerned. To illustrate his contentions, he introduces a comparison of Emerson with Cardinal Newman. With proper appreciation for the great natural gifts of the philosopher of Concord, and warm admiration for his powers of expression, he declares that his attempt to utilize all religious and philosophical systems showed that he understood none. He is an instance of the failure of genius when it limits the activity of its own thought by defective theory. On the other hand, Cardinal Newman, though endowed with poetic susceptibility, never allowed sentiment to interfere with the course of his severe logic. He abhorred vagueness. He thought in the concrete. His writings reveal a soul ever questioning, ever struggling with

difficulties, ever solving to itself the problems and issues of the day, ever arranging and re-arranging in clear order its own views and opinions, with the one aim of securing harmony in all. He is a shining example of the ever-active and careful thinker.

Passing to a discussion on the principle of thought he encounters the crowd of inefficient teachers who make the search for truth more difficult. "The truth suffers most from those overzealous defenders whose zeal is not according to their knowledge; who are guided more by their prejudices than by enlightened views; who beat the air with wild and whirling words; whose acquaintance with the new is fragmentary and at second-hand; who consider a training in one branch of science or letters sufficient preparation to cope with athletes in every other branch; finally, who enter the arena possessed of no other weapons than dogmatism and presumption . . . they set up difficulties of their own making, and knock down objections no living opponent of faith and revelation ever dreamed of putting forth." This is an exact description of one class of critics with whom Brother Azarias had to deal, though his language shows that he was not thinking of them at this moment. Further on, however, he seems to have penned for them a special instruction. "Every thought has its cause, every action its motive, every conclusion its premise. Therefore the essence of right thinking is this: that he who so thinks is not content with the last word in a chain of thought; he examines the process by which that chain has been constructed; he determines the value of the principles from which the chain starts; he regards the thought in all its bearings and defines its

true position in the nature of things." In contrasting the habits of thought peculiar to scientific and literary men, he puts his finger on the weak spot of average criticism in literature. "Though the man of science and the man of letters have this in common, that the terms they use possess a recognized value, still he of the literary habit makes not—nor does he seek to make—a connection or a continuity with aught of the past; having grasped the ideal, he labors to give it full and adequate expression independently of any other ideal, past or present. He lives and breathes in an atmosphere of opinion and assumption that permeates his thinking, and colors both thought and language; he takes it all for granted; he draws from it the material with which to shape and strengthen his own creation." This is well enough for the literary creator, but when the critic also enters an atmosphere of opinion and assumption, which seems to be the prevailing condition with us, there can be little capable criticism.

— The chapter on habits of thought is one of the best in the book, and the author's pleasant tilts with Spencer, Pascal, and Hellwald are telling and instructive. He finds the ideal in thought a necessity in forming healthy habits of thought, and proceeds to discover and establish it with his mind on its enemies. The ideal is the vital principle in literary production. It is the business of the artist to disentangle the ideal from such accidents as tend to conceal it in each age, and to give it a new embodiment. In the great treatise, the strong play, the wondrous painting, the grand poem, the noble sonata, the sublime cathedral, behind the mechanical structure lives the ideal, looking out

upon us, piercing our very souls with its unseen but recognized power. He insists that this doctrine is not only a primary factor in all the higher forms of thought and art, but also an elementary principle of criticism. Thereupon he runs counter to the received opinion of his time, which so loudly declares that art has no other aim than to construct the form for the form's sake. For this pernicious principle he has only scorn. "The art that has only itself for its aim may amuse, may please, may even cause admiration on account of the mechanical skill exhibited; but it is not the art that endures for all time. . . . Be it remembered that nothing exists outside of the Godhead for its own sake. The art produced in this spirit is sheer pettiness. Nowhere is this more evident than in the world of letters. Just as a word has value only inasmuch as it expresses an idea, even so any number of words strung together is meaningless and insane, unless it expresses a thought, not for the expression's sake, but for that of the thought. The sophists of Plato's day attempted to teach expression for the form's sake. He refuses the very name of art to such expression. 'She lies,' he tells us in his own scathing words, 'and is not an art, but an inartistic trick.' Indeed, all art worthy of the name is imbued with the earnestness of life."

In this spirit he attacks the school of Realism in letters, and exposes its degrading tendencies and results. He is convinced that in the midst of the ever-shifting scenes of human activity, only the demonstrated truth in science and the distinctly expressed ideal in art and letters remain permanent. The ideal depends absolutely upon the existence of the

supernatural order, is nourished at the fountain of the spiritual, and fails utterly when that nourishment is neglected or withdrawn. Its greatest enemy is the evil spirit of agnosticism, which, in destroying the spiritual life and spiritual culture, would drive the ideal from the hearts and minds of men. Therefore he reads agnosticism out of the camp of reason, of philosophy, and of common sense. He recognizes its attraction for many kinds of men. "Minds as brilliant as that of the late Professor Clifford, as patient and possessed of as powerful a grasp as that of Herbert Spencer, have yielded to its seductive voice, and in its service have become the hewers of wood and the drawers of water through long and toilsome years. Indolent minds find the spirit of agnosticism congenial to their moods, inasmuch as it teaches them to ignore all mystery and cut the Gordian knot of every difficulty by relegating it to the unknowable. Corrupted minds make of it a cloak for the indulgence of their appetites and passions. . . . It talks a cant phraseology that would make one believe it to be the embodiment of whatever is noblest in the teachings of Gautama and the Gospels at one and the same time. It gives the show of things for the sense."

Nevertheless, the supernatural order exists, secretly enters the agnostic's reasoning, disturbs his calculations, crops out in all his discussions, awaits him at the end of his speculations, and forces him into monstrous paradoxes. Man must recognize that order, either by the joy which its existence gives him, or by the pain which it costs him to ignore it. In the cultivation of the spiritual life, based on the super-



natural order, lie the highest possibilities for the development of the moral life and the moral sense. However, it is not with the spiritual life but with the spiritual sense that the essay is concerned. The two are distinct, and are not always found together. The function of the spiritual sense is to aid in the development of the interior spirit, and to protect that spirit from the demands made upon the soul by too great interest in the affairs of time. It enlarges our spiritual activities, and widens the mind's horizon. Hence the historic fact that the monastic life has been at all times a nursery for learning and an inspiration to original thought. Its professors cut themselves off as much as possible from the material, and <sup>saw</sup> all things by a new, clear, far-reaching light. Thus spoke Renan and Ranke of the monasteries of old. This spiritual sense, whose sole concern is the everlasting things of creation, was the gift of every great soul which devoted itself utterly to God. And the great works of intellectual genius, remaining as models of perfect achievement to all generations, derive their light and strength from its presence in the mighty authors.

With the essay on the spiritual sense the constructive part of the book comes to an end. Brother Azarias next proceeds to illustrate his principles by seeking out the spiritual significance of three masterpieces: the "Imitation of Christ," the "Divina Commedia," and "In Memoriam." He felt, as undoubtedly all Catholic critics do, a secret amusement over the predicament in which the famous books of à Kempis and Dante leave the average non-Catholic writer with regard to the Middle Ages. The reviving popularity

of the mystic and the poet have brought thinkers and readers face to face with the much-maligned centuries illumined by their work. It is the delicate office of the non-Catholic to explain to himself the presence of transcendent genius amid surroundings so fatal, according to the Protestant tradition, to intellectual power and growth. Dante is of one century and of one country, Thomas à Kempis of a later century and another country. The "Imitation" was born of the peaceful conditions of a monastery, while the "Divina Commedia" is the child of wild and stormy times in the secular world. Yet the splendor of great genius illumines both, and the same principles underlie their structures; and both argue the existence of nations highly cultured, gifted with faith, piety, and the sacred fire of the spirit no less than with the natural virtues of a civilized order. The problem is serious for the non-Catholic.

However, Brother Azarias has little to say of the predicament of his brethren. It can be imagined, after the outline just given of the main part of his book, what are his conclusions with regard to the three masterpieces. His plan is the same in each. He treats first of the author and his times; then considers the work in its general spirit and bearing as the outcome of the times and the man; and concludes with determining the philosophy and doctrine which are the foundation of the spiritual sense in the work, and how that sense finds expression. The three critiques are of unequal quality. That on Tennyson is least powerful, while Dante's takes the first place. But all are interesting, and are fine examples of the best literary criticism ever done by an American

writer, from any point of view. Dispassionate, learned, impartial, devoted to the evidence in each case, they command the respect of the critical; and being also enthusiastic, well-planned, comprehensive, candid, and gracefully written, they please the æsthetic reader.

His conclusions alone can find space in this volume. Of the "Imitation" he writes: "It is humanity finding in this simple man an adequate mouthpiece for the utterance of its spiritual wants and soul-yearnings. And his expression is so full and adequate because he regarded things in the white light of God's truth, and saw their nature and their worth clearly and distinctly, as divested of the hues and tints flung around them by passion and illusion. He probed the human heart to its lowest depths and its inmost folds; he searched intentions and motives and found self lurking in the purest: he explored the windings of human folly and human misery and discovered them to proceed from self-love and self-gratification. But this author does not simply lay bare the sores and wounds of poor bleeding humanity. He also prescribes the remedy. And none need go away unhelped. For the footsore who are weary with treading the sharp stones and piercing thorns on the highways and byways of life; for the heart aching with pain and disappointment and crushed with a weight of tribulations; for the intellect parched with thirsting after the fountain of true knowledge; for the soul living in aridity and dryness of spirit; for the sinner immersed in the mire of sin and iniquity, and the saint earnestly toiling up the hill of perfection—for all he prescribes a balm that heals, and to all

does he show the road that leads to the Life and the Light."

It is only in recent years that American critics have ventured to deal generously with either the "Imitation" or the "Divina Commedia," whose Catholic terminology was too virile for the Puritan sentiment. Even yet the editors occasionally mutilate both books, and the general tone of criticism is lacking in candor and honesty. There is a mild attempt to bolster up the ridiculous theory that the mystic and the poet were avant-couriers of revolt against the religion of their time. Brother Azarias puts his lance through the theory, and it collapses. We have seen how he dismissed Mr. Draper. In the same way he deals with the charge concerning Dante. I give a few quotations from the critique, which is the most powerful piece of work left us by the author. "Dante, as revealed to us by time and his writings, stands out in bold relief as a man proud, fiery, irascible, the bitterness of exile and poverty corroding his soul and dropping gall from his pen, and withal humble and gentle and tender; a man strong to hate and strong to love, a man sincere in all he says and does, truth-loving and truth-telling, sparing no one, neither himself, nor his friends, nor his enemies. . . . He strayed from the path of virtue and drank the cup of vice to its nauseous dregs, and in his own soul He experienced the hell of remorse. He repented, gave himself to prayer and meditation, and even in all probability to the austerities of a religious life; he relapsed, recovered himself again, and died an edifying death, clad in the habit of St. Francis. . . .

"Dante's love for the religion of his birth grew into

a passion. . . . With his profound respect for the Church, he loved her ceremonies, her dogmas, her teachings, her institutions. He, to whom the heavens and all that they contain were symbols of the spiritual essences they veil, could not fail to grasp the poetry and meaning of every prayer and ceremony and office of that Church, who, through whatever is in and about her temples, speaks eloquently to men in sign and symbol. There is not a stone in her cathedrals that has not its mystical meaning; there is not a garment with which her priest vests himself that is not emblematic of some spiritual truth; there is not an anthem or antiphon in her offices that does not help to draw out the beauty and significance behind it all. . . . How far the poet made use of the impulses emanating from one and all of these influencing agencies is known only to him who has made a complete and thorough study of the poem embodying their inspirations. For we must not lose sight of the fact that the poem is, in all the grandeur and depth of its mystical meaning, made up of the spirit and doctrine of the Church. The spites and personal animosities are but specks scattered here and there upon the whole surface of crystalline beauty. Shining out in pristine splendor is the Spiritual Sense. . . . Dante's chief mission, the prime motive of his intense earnestness, is the Spiritual Sense underlying his poem. This he has not left to be discovered. He takes pains to inform the reader. He tells him that leaving aside all subtle investigation, the end and aim of his poem briefly put, both as regards the whole and its parts, is to remove therefrom men living in a state of misery in this life, and lead them to one of happiness. . . .

"Such is the Spiritual Sense of the 'Divina Commedia.' We have traced it, a golden thread running through the whole extent of the poem; we have found that sense, with the prophet of old, dictating the first line; its notes resound strong and clear in the very last verses; on it are strung the brightest pearls of thought and the rarest gems of diction; by means of it are all the parts solidly welded together, and unity and harmony given to the whole; it has been the chief inspiration of the poet, sustaining him in his highest soarings and dictating his sublimest songs. . . . The Spiritual Sense is used constructively. It has built up the poem into that grand climax of thought and aspiration—among the grandest ever reached by human genius—with which the poet closes. The clew to this sense, indeed every clew to the poem, is to be found in the 'Paradiso.' Carlyle called this portion, to him, 'a kind of inarticulate music.' It is not to be wondered at. The music of the 'Paradiso' is the music of the spiritual life; and the music of spiritual life can be interpreted only by those into whose existence spiritual life enters as a living, breathing reality. It is a music articulate and familiar to each religious man. It throbs in his every aspiration. His ear has been attuned to its exquisite cadences. . . . The fervor and love and high thought, that are all so grandly intensified in the terse rhythm of the 'Divina Commedia,' are the fervor and love and high thought that are daily moving tens of thousands of men and women to lead the spiritual life therein portrayed, in obedience to the Love Divine that rules hearts and sways the heavens in perpetual harmony."

The strain of this criticism is unfamiliar to the



American ear, which has not yet grown accustomed to its true, but unwelcome sweetness. Very learned, very winning, very pregnant and blunt were the paragraphs in which Brother Azarias delivered his rebuke to the petty criticism of his times. He did not find in Tennyson a subject so congenial as in Dante and à Kempis, but his analysis and conclusions with regard to "In Memoriam" are agreeable. "The final note of Tennyson's song, which he makes the prelude of his poem, terminates where the final note of Dante's song terminates, in that love which moves the world, the sun and all the other stars. 'In Memoriam,' viewed from the ground upon which we now stand, is a highly finished expression of the heart-hunger of a soul groping after the fulfilment of its desires and aspirations, searching into science and art, challenging heaven and earth to yield up the secret of happiness and contentment; and in the primitive instincts of human nature together with the essential truths of the Christian religion—in these alone interpreted in the light of faith—discovering the meaning of life and answers to the questionings of doubt and materialism. In this fact lies the claim of the poem to rank with 'Faust' and the "Divina Commedia," not indeed in degree of greatness and fulness of expression, but in kind. It is also a world-poem."

Thus the book closes. It is the author's masterpiece. It holds the sweetest and strongest utterance of his life; and no nobler book in subject and spirit has any American writer put forth. It is easy to say of a book that it will live, even when it is dying. More wisely may it be said of the "Phases of Thought and Criticism" that it deserves to live beyond any book

of criticism which this country has yet seen. Its mere existence is a rebuke to the incompetent critic, since it illustrates what the critic should be to perfection, and opens a whole world of thought to the learned, whose training has excluded that half of the world with which Brother Azarias was acquainted.

## CHAPTER XII.

### ESSAYS ON EDUCATION.

THE course of circumstances finally led Brother Azarias into the field of pedagogy. It was natural that an educator of his temperament should drift at last into the unexplored regions at his own doors. He was never satisfied until he had gone to the root of problems with which he was concerned. The question of education in the United States has been on every man's tongue since the Emersonians broke with the Christian theory and set out to shape the age to the transcendental mould. It fell to Brother Azarias occasionally to refute their absurd contentions, or to defend the Catholic position. The wealth of misinformation on educational matters then going the rounds of the magazines, the editorial columns, the text-books, and the lecture-halls, must have startled him did he not have experience of it in other departments of literary work. In his extensive and varied reading he had encountered much matter bearing on education, and had noted it with the interest of a teacher, as important for future use when the proper occasion arose. The opportunity came quickly. Years before his death the United States Commissioner of Education had invited him to write a volume for a series of educational works which the commissioner had planned and was to edit. He accepted the task, and for some years was engaged in

extensive reading at home and abroad to fit himself thoroughly for the work.

The American condition in respect to popular education called for such treatment as he intended to give the history of education and its methods from the earliest times. We are crude enough in most things, one can admit in view of the fact that our country is only a century old; but our crudeness amounts to a vice in this single matter of educating the child and the citizen. For thirty years the American world has been all at sea as to its principles of training, and all but lost as to the science of pedagogy. In his writings on this science Brother Azarias does not quote a single American authority as worthy of his notice on so important a subject. On the contrary, his entire aim has been to inject some sense of their own incapacity and almost hopeless ignorance into the mass of writers and workers in the field of popular education. His gentle nature did not suffer him to characterize the general condition so truly, but with his wide grasp of the whole matter he could not but have felt the wretchedness of the American situation. The one fixed fact about which there could be no doubt was, that after thirty years of agitation, begun by the Emersonians, the system which trained the children of the land had been handed over in its entirety to the materialists. The ancient tradition of the harmonious development of the whole nature of the child, introduced by Christianity and brought to perfection in a million schools, was abandoned for the new principle of a divided training: the mental in the school, and the spiritual in the household or the temple.

Granted all that may be said by the earnest and moderate in behalf of the new principle, and in explanation of the conditions which drove Protestants to a surrender of their most honorable traditions, the fact remains that materialism alone has benefited by the new system, that the children have suffered, and that education has received a fatal setback by the American adoption of a principle hatched out of the egg of French atheism. When Brother Azarias ventured to speak on the subject he found few prepared to understand him outside of two or three experts. No one seemed to know anything about the history of education previous to the French Revolution. It was a commonly accepted thesis that no primary schools existed before that period. It was taken for granted that the world had never possessed a standard of education like the American, and that no time previous to the Greek and Roman, or since, could teach us anything except through its errors or its neglect of popular education. Such books as discussed the matter were the work of scholars made with prejudice, or of students of encyclopædias, or translations from the French and German writers who wrote only to bolster up the Revolution. The stream of error, falsehood, misconception, and prejudice, which flowed through the rather feeble literature of pedagogy, was violent and seemingly unconquerable. The Catholic writers who uttered a protest were simply unheard in the loud murmur of satisfaction with themselves which rose from the throng of educators.

In some way the principle of popular education had first attracted and then inspired the multitude of

idealists in the United States, who are ever on the watch for a new gospel. They flocked to the standard in thousands. Their clamor and vulgarity shut out from view the serious, earnest workers. By the mere force of numbers and lungs they set the current in motion; and it has gone ahead like an avalanche. One might as well attempt to undo the pension evil before that day when the last widow of the last soldier of the Civil War shall have departed for eternity, as to turn this tide of enthusiasm before another gospel shall have caught the fancy of the educational shouters. The work had to see a beginning, however, and Brother Azarias, with many conscientious students on the non-Catholic side, undertook with enthusiasm his part of it. It was an immense misfortune for the cause of education that death interrupted his labors. His work on the history of schools and methods was hardly begun when his last sickness came upon him. Yet the single volume which he has left us, though it does no more than hint at the possibilities, is a wholesome stimulus to the honest student, and a severe rebuke to the loose methods and depressing ignorance of our professional theorists in education. It is not enough to bring deep interest and warm enthusiasm to the cause of popular education. Critical acquaintance with the past, knowledge of the best standards used at present, candid recognition of the best work done anywhere, familiarity with the nature of the child, with his environment present and future, are evident necessities for the scientific educator.

An essay on the primary schools of the Middle Ages opens in the logical order the volume of



educational essays. It is an instruction for the people who deny boldly the existence of primary schools previous to the year 1789. "Thirty years ago," says Brother Azarias, "men might inform you concerning the colleges of the Jesuits or the Oratorians in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; but on the state of primary education, or whether it had existence at all prior to the Revolution, they were in total darkness. To-day, he would be a very daring or very ignorant man who would assert, in presence of an intelligent audience in any part of the civilized world, that there was no primary education before the end of the eighteenth century." And he proceeds to describe the scores of volumes, original documents or faithful descriptions, brought out in France since 1857 by various writers, which prove how well cared for were the peasant populations of the Middle Ages in the matter of primary schools. Not only have these writers unearthed the documents bearing upon the existence of these schools, but they have been able to give us innumerable details of their pupils, books, studies, and teachers, so as to make a perfect picture of the child at school in his studies and in his sports. He is not a whit different from his fellow of the nineteenth century. His teacher is more severe, however, than the modern schoolmaster, but takes high rank in popular estimation, and is associated with the priest in many of the public offices of the Church.

Parents were as much interested in their children in those days as at present, and as eager to secure for them necessary advantages. Bishops and priests, councils, kings, governors, town-rulers, the chari-

table, the learned, the enterprising, felt in the young that natural interest which the same classes display to-day. Naturally, where the existence of a regular society, able to protect itself from the numerous marauders of those times, permitted a proper exercise of their kindly feelings, they founded schools for the children. It is pleasant and creditable to our common nature to find in human beings of the tenth century so many evidences of kindred feeling and good sense. The wild assertions of the irresponsible and ignorant concerning this or that age insult our common humanity. The primary schools of the earliest days taught the children what the circumstances required and permitted. The common prayers, the knowledge of religious doctrines, the alphabet, the Latin tongue, numeration, writing, and in advanced classes the reading of ancient deeds, charts, and similar documents, were the main studies. "Let us not censure them for their limited scope," says Brother Azarias, thrusting his keen blade under the ribs of American Mohammedans, "we find it no better elsewhere. We turn, for instance, to the Moorish primary schools in Spain, and we find the children of the poorer classes learning, in their way, what our Christian children had been learning in theirs. They are taught reading, writing, and religious doctrine. The child first learns the Arabian alphabet. He is then taught the difference of letters according to punctuation, accentuation, sound, the composition of letters, and the other elements that enter into the study of Arabic words. He is afterward carefully drilled upon pronunciation. Finally he learns to read the Koran, which is for the Arabian

the alpha and omega of all study. Here his education finishes."

Mr. James Johonnot, author of a book entitled "Principles and Practice of Teaching," gave Brother Azarias an opportunity to treat of cloistral schools, and incidentally to describe for the American public the misinformation supplied to it by eminent but prejudiced or careless writers. Mr. Johonnot informed his readers that Chinese civilization owed its deficiencies to the fact that the education of its people was a system of memorizing; then he speculated a little on the *monkish* method of memorizing; finally, he declared that the effort of *monkish* teachers was directed to the exclusion of such knowledge as might disturb their authority over the people, quite as much as to the cultivation of other kinds; that their schools did little or nothing to banish ignorance; and that it was rare, quoting Hallam, for a layman to be able to sign his name. Brother Azarias smiled grimly on Mr. Johonnot, called his statements news, but wild and misleading, and asked him if he did not know how long ago Maitland had refuted Hallam; wondered if Maitland's light had shone in vain for him, and if he was not aware that at the present day sweeping assertions can no more be made of the Middle Ages than of the nineteenth century. "We dare say," he continues, "the myth of Hallam's rare layman who could sign his name will continue to pass down upon the tide of prejudice until Macaulay's forthcoming New Zealander shall label it in some future museum with his sketch of the ruins of St. Paul's. But in the mean time we ask ourselves in all earnestness: How comes it that we find disseminated

among our public-school teachers, as knowledge, as clear-cut information statements so reeking with ignorance and prejudice and bigotry? Why is it that the intelligence of this respectable body must be insulted by such gross, unhistorical assertions? Surely, of all men, should educators be familiar with the latest and most accurate word in history, in literature, in science."

Having thus captured, dried, and labelled Mr. Johonnot, in terms very severe for the gentlest of brothers, he begins his dissertation on the cloistral schools of the Middle Ages. Very learned and very beautiful is his description of the teachers, pupils, books, studies, methods, and discipline of the most famous schools of the modern time; the schools which gave us all the great lights of the early ages, so many of our greatest saints, and kept the lamp of knowledge in every department burning through the centuries of civil disorder. Their discipline, many of their studies, a few of their methods, and their fine spirit are the chief features in the Catholic colleges and convents of the present time, and in many secular schools. They trained the clergy, the monks, the philosophers, the princes, the nobles, the gifted geniuses of ten centuries. Miserable indeed look Mr. Johonnot and his rash assertion when Brother Azarias has completed his eloquent, finished, and fascinating picture of the cloistral schools. The literary charm of this essay is not its least delightful feature. Your true teacher is ever a lover of the young, and rejoices over the pleasant exhibition of youthful spirit, whether in actual life, in ancient pictures, or in heavy chronicles. Brother

Azarias could not let pass a characteristic scene of life at the famous monastery of St. Gall in the tenth century.

The Emperor Conrad once visited there, and granted the boys a three days' holiday forever on the anniversary of his visit. On the special occasion herein described, the boys were making merry in their recreation-hall when the Abbot Solomon, recently made bishop, entered. He was promptly made prisoner, according to a custom which permitted every stranger coming into the school to be made prisoner and to be kept in durance until he redeemed himself. In vain he argued that as abbot of the monastery the custom did not include him. "We capture the bishop and have naught to do with the abbot," said the captors, and they conducted him to the master's chair. "Since I take the place of your master," said the bishop, "I have the right to use his privileges; take off your jackets to be punished." The amazed boys were compelled to obey, but asked the privilege granted by their professor to redeem themselves. "How is that?" said the bishop. Then the little ones began to speak to him in Latin in their own defence as well as they could; they were followed by the mediums, who asked him in rhythmic language what evil had they done him that he should threaten punishment, and who appealed to the king for protection in their rights; finally, the versifiers sang their astonishment that a new guest should attempt to overthrow an ancient custom of the school. The delighted abbot surrendered to appeals so happily made, embraced every child as he stood in his tunic, and redeemed himself by ordering that thence-

forward on the Emperor's holidays meat and wine should be served to the pupils.

The essay on the Palatine School is brief, while that on the Normal Schools affords him an opportunity to describe the labors of the Blessed De La Salle in first establishing both method and school for the training of teachers. Here he finds occasion to praise the honest and efficient work of an American student of education, Dr. Henry Barnard, who gave his life to the work of studying and comparing the educational systems of the civilized world. Brother Azarias pays him this tribute, which he was not able to pay to any others: "Nor did he confine his observations to state institutions. He also sat on the benches of the schools conducted by the Jesuits and the Christian Brothers, and found much to admire in their educational methods, and without prejudice revealed the secrets of their great success. He went back to the educational traditions of the early Christian schools, and feared not to speak the truth, so far as he knew it, concerning the efforts of the Catholic Church to preserve learning and maintain schools during the ages of violence, through which she was striving to civilize the barbarians who overran Europe. Pamphlet after pamphlet and volume after volume has he issued, embodying the past and the present of educational reformers and educational schemes for the study and reflection of American teachers. All educators, knowing the man and his work, knowing the devotedness and the singleness of purpose with which he labored during the past fifty years, will agree that he is worthy of any recognition, no matter how emphatic." As Dr. Barnard in his



report of the normal schools did not trace their origin and growth, Brother Azarias performs that task with great honor to the founder of the Christian Brothers, who is proved to have been the originator of the normal school as we know it in our times.

The same educator was also the practical inventor of the simultaneous method of teaching children, a fact demonstrated in the essay on this method. Incidental to the demonstration is Brother Azarias' demolition of Mr. F. V. N. Painter, whose history of education is the muddy spring from which some thousands of American teachers draw their information on the methods and teachers and schools of the past. He has performed his task, says the Brother, with bile and bitterness against everything Catholic; he praises Fenelon under the impression that he was a Jansenist; he ignores the work of the Church wherever he can; he has not a word about the contributions of Italy and Spain to European education; and in his account of French education the name of De La Salle does not find a place. These derelictions of Mr. Painter are all the more painful when Brother Azarias, after many pages of most telling proof, sums up the benefits conferred by the Blessed De la Salle upon the modern world.

"The Church, in crowning him Blessed, has most fittingly given to popular education a patron. He is the benefactor of the modern schoolmaster. He it was who raised primary teaching out of the ruts of never-ending routine, carried on in the midst of time-honored noise and confusion, and, in giving it principles and a method, made of it a science. He hedged in the dignity of the schoolmaster. He was the first to

assert the exclusive right of the master to devote his whole time to his school-work. . . . He broke down the barriers of exclusiveness that confined the school-master to certain subjects, beyond which he dare not go, to the detriment of poor children. . . . Still more, in making, for the first time in the history of education, the mother-tongue the basis of all instruction, he appealed to the intelligence of the child, prepared the way for the study of national literature, and opened up to the grown man avenues of knowledge and amusement that had hitherto been encumbered with rubbish. His was the merit of the pioneer. And if to-day the artisan and the workingman, the world over, can read and write and discuss intelligently all the political and social issues of the hour, they owe it in great measure to the method of teaching completed and perfected by Blessed De La Salle and his disciples, the Brothers of the Christian Schools."

It is savagely irritating to a man of Brother Azarias' learning and breadth of mind to be forever dealing with such mouthpieces of other men's errors as the Johonnots and the Painters. The United States is full of them. Their masters are usually the European disciples of the Revolution, of Voltaire, and of German rationalism, and are the sworn enemies of Catholic truth. They have taken up seriously the task of blackening the Church to the people, in order to establish their own tradition. Behind a mask of erudition and candor they are doing more effective lying than the professional falsifiers of religion. A leading investigator of this kind is the Frenchman, Gabriel Compayrè, whose books have been translated

into English and are becoming popular in this country. To his deficiencies, reckless statements, and villainous prejudice, Brother Azarias more than once applied the lash of his wrath and his learning. M. Compayrè was candid enough to accept the rebuke by expressing his astonishment and delight that America held a scholar so familiar with the science, the history, and the literature of pedagogics.

The trimming which Compayrè receives in this book should serve as a warning to his readers, and cause himself to revise his own methods. Brother Azarias does not think him an apt scholar, no matter how good he may be as a professor, because of his proclivity to draw from sources that confirm his prejudices and to avoid authorities that might shake them; because, also, of his habit of quotation at second-hand, and of making blunders that would shame a schoolboy; and, finally, because he keeps up these bad habits after nearly two decades of study and many warnings from the scholars of the time. His "*Histoire Critique des Doctrines de l'Education en France*" in two volumes has been done into English by Mr. W. H. Payne, of Boston, who found that it represented to his mind very nearly the ideal of the treatise that is needed by the teaching profession of this country. Brother Azarias replied that the teaching profession need not waste time in thanking Mr. Payne for such a tissue of misrepresentation. "It is simply a condensation of all the bile and virulence and hatred for everything Catholic therein, but ill concealed beneath a tone of philosophic moderation. It is the expression of extreme partisanship adapted to the audience for which it was prepared. No longer

speaking to a dignified body of learned academicians, but addressing students who are taught to hate clericalism in all its forms; who are training to profit by the laicization of the schools in France, and supplant religious teachers throughout the land; who are disposed to swallow any calumny that may be administered to them, and who are still too young and too ignorant to unravel the sophistries into which the true and the false are woven, M. Compayrè excels himself in artful misrepresentation. His book is superficial, untruthful to history, and misleading."

This is the thesis of his criticism on Compayrè. He exposes the French writer thoroughly, whose only door of escape is the well-known trick of saying, it is only a question concerning the out-of-date Catholic. This is sufficient for the average Protestant mind anywhere. Compayrè is interesting and eloquent, but Brother Azarias declares him unworthy of confidence or fame, since not a paragraph penned by him but has its drop of prejudice. In this connection he puts a practical question to the English-speaking Catholics of the world. Are we to leave to the Compayrès and their kind the writing of our histories, the formulating of our theories, of pedagogics? So far this is what has been done, and the Catholic past, which belongs to us, which we alone understand and love, is misinterpreted for all classes of readers by men who look for all good things to the French Revolution.

The volume of essays on education closes with two descriptions of the rise of university colleges and of mediæval university life. They are magnificent studies of their subjects. It is unnecessary to give an

outline of them here, as the reader can easily judge of their power from the descriptions already given of their companions. But no brief chapter can do justice to the singular merit and deep interest of these essays. They are not only little mines of learning, powerful demonstrations of their special themes, invaluable contributions to the history of pedagogics, but also literary jewels, brilliant, polished, and set exquisitely. The Catholic heart warms at the fine descriptions of educators of the past, of their schools, their books, their theories, methods, pupils, and achievements. It is a glorious picture drawn for us by this facile and exact pen. And a glow of indignation heats the blood at the merciless, conscienceless treatment to which these glories of the Middle Ages have been subjected by the vicious adherents of the Revolution, and their fool-friends everywhere. If the educators of the United States are disposed to take the lesson provided by this volume, they will learn at once two things: that no good can be got out of vilification of the past, whether Catholic or Chinese; and that on pedagogics no American voice has yet spoken with the learning, exactness, and honesty of Brother Azarias. Great, indeed, was the loss to our nation when this profound scholar died. His work and his example would have been a tremendous stimulus to the cause of education, and his name would have kept in order the Painters, the *Johonnots*, and the *Compayrès*, who as a rule learn prudence only through extinction.



DE LA SALLE INSTITUTE, NEW YORK





## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE SPIRITUAL ELEMENT.

THE existence of the spiritual sense, its nature and characteristics, its presence in great literary works, were first described for American readers by Brother Azarias. Only a deeply spiritual nature, spiritual by supernatural grace and by natural acquirements, could have so seized on the principle and so expressed it. He described and illustrated it. His use of it in criticism gave his writings greater power and charm. His habit of feeling for the hinge of things, of going to the deepest depths of a problem, and his honesty toward his own mind and toward others, had led him to comprehend the full importance of the spiritual sense—of its soil, spiritual culture, and of its expression as the spiritual element of human work. Ambitious to do the best kind of work, no matter what the cost, he placed his chief reliance on the powers and instincts of the soul, and only in less degree upon mere knowledge, to produce the illuminating thought and the graceful expression.

The endeavor to express the spiritual life in his writings is the safeguard of the learned monk devoted to intellectual pursuits. Cardinal Newman gave his whole life and his whole genius to the expression of the spiritual, and his literary critics, Mr. Hutton for instance, wonder that there was yet so much literary

quality in his work. Brother Azarias was an intense admirer of Newman as the spiritual man and the literary artist. The circumstances of his life helped to deepen with each year the spiritual channel of his nature. The rule of the Institute had the training of the spiritual nature for its object in part. The habits of thought and action for years were intensified by various illnesses, which left him in the end somewhat of an invalid, ever on the edge of the grave. When sickness does not overpower and exhaust the strong mind and will, its effect is to give the spiritual man a better grip on the realities of time and eternity, and the true monk a deeper indifference to the world. Thus it was with Brother Azarias. The more he suffered the dearer his own soul and his own state of life became to him. He clung to his Institute and his teaching office with deeper affection. His merit on this point is hardly to be understood or appreciated without a knowledge of the circumstances.

In 1885 he was at the height of his fame and in the maturity of his powers. In his condition of health it would have been an advantage to retire from community life, and to nurse his broken body for a while before taking his place in some university where his talents and acquirements would have fullest scope and appreciation. He could have done this without difficulty or dishonor, and did not lack honorable inducements so to do. But he did not yield either to hardships within or to temptations without his order. He had made no mistake in his calling when first the life in community had drawn him from home and a promising secular career. Only the direct ex-

pression of the will of God could have driven him from his cell. To the swallow the temptations of the eagle may seem no great thing; nevertheless they are the combats which test and refine his mettle, and strengthen him for the loftier flights toward heaven. The spiritual life welled up in Brother Azarias and flowed out into his writings, as it could not were he but repeating the speech of others, or drawing upon his imagination, or indulging in hypocritical mimicry. Caedmon and Bede are the heroes of his English literature; Aquinas not only outshines Plato and Aristotle in the comparison of doctrines, but holds the first place in his heart; it is à Kempis who guides the flight of his thought in the "Phases"; and in his attempt to express a foundation principle for philosophy, Christ the Word is the corner-stone. Hence he would consider that his work had been without value did it not display on every page some gleams of the spiritual element; if the critic could not find many indications of that spiritual sense which he had so deeply admired and so often sought in the inspired pages of Dante and his peers. It will not be out of place, before closing this review of his literary work, to point out how nobly the spiritual element shone out in the books of Brother Azarias.

In the first pages of the "Phases" he locates the reefs upon which the human soul may wreck its fortunes. "The exclusive exercise of any one activity (of the soul) is detrimental to the rest. The exclusive exercise of the reason dwarfs the other functions. It dries up all taste for art and letters and starves out the spirit of piety and devotion. In the

constant development of the æsthetic sense, one may refine the organs of sense and cultivate taste and sensibility; but if it is done to the exclusion of rigid reasoning and the superior emotions of the soul, it degenerates into sentimentalism and corruption of heart. So also with exclusive pietism; it narrows the range of thought, fosters the spirit of bigotry and dogmatism, and makes man either an extravagant dreamer or an extreme fanatic. Only when truth and goodness walk hand-in-hand, and the heart grows apace with the intellect, does the soul develop into strong, healthy action."

The minor light by which that soul finds its way through the labyrinth of life is from God through the reason. "The intellectual light by which our mind apprehends and pronounces upon truth—that which makes it evident to us that two and two make four, or that it is impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time, or that every effect has a cause—that light is in some sense a participation in the Uncreated Light that contains in itself the eternal principles of things and the eternal reasons for all actual and possible truths and existences. Here we have the true source both of the knowledge we possess and the intellect by which we know. The human intellect so illumined is the principle of thought. Such an aspect of our thinking brings us nearer to God. The light of his Divine Countenance is stamped on us. It guides our reason; it strengthens our understanding; it illumines our thoughts; it places its impress on all that is true, all that is good, and all that is beautiful."

The superior light by which the soul is guided to

its destiny is the direct revelation of God through Christ. "Since the very light of our natural reason—that primary condition of all knowledge and all certainty—comes from God, why may not the same all-powerful Author, if it so pleases His infinite wisdom, communicate other truths of an order beyond the reach of human discovery? Such a communication were only an additional ray from the same inexhaustible source. The light of that ray may be more dazzling, its warmth more burning, its energy more vitalizing, but it is still a ray from the same Divine Light that illumines this world. And could our weak intellectual vision only bear its full brilliancy we would recognize it as of a piece with other rays less brilliant. For in that Divine Essence whence all truths emanate there are no broken aspects of things, no wastes of knowledge, no doubt or darkness, no opposition or contradiction of views, nothing of all that belongs to our feeble and limited intelligence; but all those truths that we apprehend in a partial sense, and under various æsthetic literary and scientific aspects, are therein harmonized into a single whole."

The nature of man is such that the ideal must rule it if its integrity is to be preserved. "Man has within him two opposing elements. One seeks to raise him up into a spiritual and spiritualizing sphere of thought and action; the other tends to drag him down to things earthly and debasing. . . . Now, it is the function of the sense of admiration in man to raise up and spiritualize the inferior parts of man's nature, so that they grovel not in things earthly, and to strengthen and improve his nobler aspirations.



Where man may not imitate, where he may not even love, he can still admire. Wherever an ideal is expressed, there is an object for his admiration. We may not be able to explain this mysterious relation, but we all have the experience of it. Our souls are so attuned as to give out a music responsive to the chords that are touched. . . . And therewith comes a vague yearning, a longing as for something. What does it all mean? The recognition is of the ideal. . . . 'The memory,' says Plato, 'on beholding the beautiful object, is carried back to the nature of absolute beauty.' Thus there is not only a recognition; there is also a reminiscence of a higher spiritual order of things of which the soul has had occasional glimpses; there is a yearning for the home to which it belongs. Cavil as men may, the artistic ideal is an essential element in art work and art criticism; it speaks to something higher than the material sense; it tells of something more than technical detail and exquisite finish. There are moments when, beneath the spell of some great masterpiece, man feels the nearness of the Godhead, and his soul is thrilled with emotions that vibrate beneath the divine touch."

The source of the ideal, its glorious fountain, is the Word. "Ascending higher still

'Upon the great world's altar-stairs  
That slope through darkness up to God,'

we come to the prototype of all created types, and find it existing in the Word. Here is the source and fountain-head of the ideal. . . . We have at last found the origin and source of the ideal. In all earnestness have we sought it; and, hushed in holy awe

before the Godhead, in a loving reverence do we contemplate its splendor. The Word is not only the source of all created existences, the Word is also the light that enlightens the world. Its glory is reflected, now dimly, now clearly, in every created thing. To the Word did we trace the source whence emanate the principles of our thinking. And as the reason is illuminated with a light above and beyond the sparks that it throws out in its workings, that light giving it all necessary and self-evident truths; as the soul is nurtured and strengthened by that mysterious energy called grace, so the created ideal in each individual mind is enlightened and vivified by the uncreated ideal dwelling in the Word. This illumination of the ideal is the expression of the beautiful. We now know whence it is that a thing of beauty becomes for each of us a joy forever. . . . God is in us, and we are in God, and the sense of our nearness to Him grows upon us."

It is unnecessary to comment upon these beautiful paragraphs. Their sense and expression of the purest spirituality are exquisite. One is not surprised after reading pages of this depth and beauty to learn that the human gods of this monk's life were, not such geniuses as Dante and Plato, much as he loved and worshipped them, but those whose lives gave the fullest expression to the pure soul illuminating a great mind. His various appreciations of Caedmon show where his heart rested, and upon what models he formed his own life. "(Caedmon) while revolving the subject in his heart looks across the plain and discerns the lights of Streanshalh stream in upon him. . . . 'There,' he said to himself, 'is heaven upon

earth; there are men and women leading angels' lives, and, like those around the throne of God, singing the praises of their Creator.' Thereupon he muses upon heaven; he remembers the angelic choirs; he feels his soul within him flutter with eager desire to sing of the abode of the blessed, of the creation of the world, of the ways of Providence toward men; and then and there he determines to render himself worthy of the honor of singing of these high themes by purifying his heart still more, and making it a fitting instrument to be played upon by the Divine hand. He resolves to consecrate the remainder of his days to the noble purpose of making poems that will supersede the shameful songs that still bind so many Christian hearts to the pagan world of thought. Then and there does he feel the new mantle of inspiration descend upon him; he sings the creation; he dreams of it;" and from that day lives Caedmon the poet as a monk in the abbey of Whitby.

Brother Azarias continues: "Living in so elevated a sphere of thought, Caedmon could find it in himself to write nothing but what tended to elevate and spiritualize the aspirations and emotions of human nature. . . . But the holiness of his life no less than the strength of his genius added weight to his words, and made them strike with such force. . . . He was an eminently religious man, fond of prayer, devoted to the reception of the sacraments of the Church, attentive and punctual in the performance of his various duties. . . . His happy, cheerful disposition—always prepared for a kind word or a pleasant saying—tended to make the religious life attractive to others. There was nothing gloomy in his piety. He was no

friend of moroseness. This last he regarded in its true light, rather as a hindrance than a help to genuine religious feeling. Leading such a life, how else could his death be than happy also? . . . He would have his soul wafted upon the song of prayer and benediction ascending from the chapel near by. So he asks how soon the time was when the brothers were to sing the nocturnal praises of the Lord; and when told that it was not far off, he said, 'Let us await that hour'; and, signing himself with the sign of the cross, he laid his head on the pillow, and, falling into a slumber, his soul passed away."

A writer's ideals enter into his work and color his expressions; his visions of his own future also tinge his sentences; and again the experiences of his life also cast their shade of color over his pictures. Who ever knew Brother Azarias well could read much of his life in his references to St. Thomas Aquinas. "Modesty of demeanor and humility in thought and act arising from a sense of one's unworthiness before God; chastity in thought as well as in speech and deed; obedience to all lawfully constituted authority, seeing its source and sanction in God; poverty in spirit; resignation to the Divine will under all trials and troubles, accepting as from the hand of God whatever of sickness, or pain, or bodily infirmity, or annoyance from without that may befall one; the meekness that resents not injuries, that considers itself blessed amid revilings and persecutions, that returns good for evil; the spirit of prayer—these are a few out of the many virtues that Christianity in a special degree made its own. These constitute the Christian ideal. It is the ideal that an Aquinas fol-

lowed when, resisting the importunities of flesh and blood, he abandoned the comforts of a lordly home, that he might, in the retirement of the cloister, practise those virtues and live in intimate union with God. It is the ideal that tens of thousands of delicate virgins, thronging the convents the world over, have in view, in entering with a light heart and a cheerful spirit upon their lives of prayer and self-devotion; it is the ideal that moulds the Sister of Charity ministering to want and disease and crime and misery. It is the ideal of Jesus and His Virgin Mother."

How faithful he himself had been to that ideal his whole life is beautiful witness. Could he have been other than faithful with this conception of the Gospel of Christ? "The Gospel introduces the law of love, and before its brilliancy all other systems pale; gradually it takes possession of the public conscience, and the prominent principles of other days drop out to be embedded in the records of history. It revolutionizes life and thought. . . . It looks upon the soul of a slave as something as precious in the sight of God as that of a free-born citizen. It inculcates the dignity of labor. The pagan world understood the value of labor, but the pagan world never raised itself up to a proper conception of the dignity of labor. . . . 'No man,' says Aristotle, 'living the life of a mechanic or laborer can practise virtue.' All this was changed by Jesus, the Son of the carpenter. He blessed the poor. He raised up and dignified labor. He showed men how to sanctify it. And so that which had been regarded as a curse and a hardship has come to be the greatest blessing to man,

to soothe his pains, to heal the wounds of a troubled heart, to develop energy, and to help him to save his soul. Pagan legislation taught men how to endure privations and sufferings for their country's sake; it taught them to see naught of good beyond the narrow limits of their own territory; it inspired them with no sympathy for weakness, no consolation for sorrow, no reverence for old age, no tenderness for decrepitude, no sense of the awful sanctity of human life. . . . It has passed out of the public conscience. A new law, the law of Divine love and Divine grace, shines upon the world and renews the face of the earth." It was this law which ruled the life of Brother Azarias, and his life and his writings displayed the power of the law. The mouth speaks from the heart's fulness. The atmosphere of his literary work is almost purely spiritual, and is luminous of the spiritual world. Where he is least conscious of effort, there the spirit is evident. He would have been the first to condemn, did not his work show in each part the true spiritual texture.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### LETTERS AND NOTES.

WITH the best part of Brother Azarias' career described, and the character of his work fully understood, the reader is now prepared to appreciate a few letters and notes which shed some light upon a silent and reserved man, who was known well only by most intimate friends. Ill-health and disappointment did not rob him of cheerfulness, for he was ever the happiest of souls; but the long shadows of evening were stretching across his life, hinting of the eternal silence into which he was so soon to enter; and they seemed to dispose him to greater quiet than before. The following letter was penned before his last visit to Europe, and hints at the work done for the Institute in the intervals of more serious labor.

#### *His Opinion of Himself.*

DEAR FRIEND:—I assure you that your beautiful letter is as refreshing to me as you say mine is to you. I dare say the friends you lost through their own selfishness were not worthy of your friendship. And I am afraid that you will also find me wanting in the high standard of friendship which you have established, for I also am a very selfish, weak, erring being—and you must not look for anything else in me. You see I warn you in time, but with it all I

can promise you the continuance of the esteem and high regard with which I have always thought of you. . . . I am just now hard at work preparing a reader for our series of readers. I am also helping our Brothers in Canada to get out another reader, and I must get them to send you a copy when it comes out. You will find in it several pieces from my pen, and some very beautiful pieces from the great writers. Especially will you find about twenty pages devoted to a study of Cardinal Newman, which I think will please you very much. Altogether I believe you will find that reader to contain a very good and very solid selection of pieces of a high literary standard, except indeed the productions of my poor pen. I requested that some of them be left out, and could not succeed in having them omitted. I suppose you know that our dear Archbishop Gibbons is to get the cardinal's hat. You can't have all the good things up your way.

BROTHER AZARIAS.

He was a sincere student and admirer of Cardinal Newman, and sent him a copy of his address "On Thinking" on its first appearance, to which the great Cardinal replied in a way that captivated his American disciple.

*Election to Office.*

DEAR JOHN:— . . . The other morning I awoke and found myself announced in the papers as a state official, commissioner on the board of health with Governor Carroll and other leading citizens of Howard County. Do you think I ought to run for Congress next? But this came as a nice honor. The slate was

filled and voted, and my name came up accidentally. One asked why not place me on the board. So forthwith by acclamation I was voted a member, and am expected to make a speech next month. . . . I had some copies of Newman's letter printed for my friends. It is the best tribute I ever received, or shall receive. It says everything in few words.

BROTHER AZARIAS.

*From Cardinal Newman.*

DEAR BROTHER AZARIAS:—I thank you for your address, as also for other similar gifts which you have made me. It is original, striking, and, I consider, adapted to make readers think. Perhaps there is too much matter in it to allow of every part being sufficiently developed for ordinary students. Religion must be making progress among you, under God's blessing, when it has such intelligent and large-minded exponents. Of course I feel grateful for the interest and kindness with which you write of me. Very truly yours,

JOHN H. CARD. NEWMAN.

BIRMINGHAM, March 19th, 1881.

The following letters and notes relate to his trip to Europe in 1886, and contain some interesting allusions and much sprightly description.

*On the Ocean.*

DEAR SISTER:—I am writing this on board the steamer. It is now about ten o'clock, and we are to get to Queenstown this evening at nine. With the exception of a few hours I have been very well. . . .

We have had a nice company on board. . . . There is the chronic grumbler who finds nothing right. There is the mischief-maker prying into everybody's business, setting everybody by the ears, retailing stories from one to the other. There is the man that knows everything, and considers himself the great light on every subject. There are two Mormon women, as meek and quiet as could be, who have been trying to impress their views on others in a quiet way. There are two bright, cultured Sisters of the Presentation, who have been sick by turns, now one, then the other. There is a young Protestant missionary going to convert the little savages of Africa. . . .

*In Paris.*

DEAR SISTER:—Your very beautiful letters reached me this morning, and I hasten to reply to them at once. I am glad to hear from you—glad that you find your new home so pleasant—glad that you bear up so bravely under the change, because I know it must have been a big sacrifice for you to leave a home where you had been rooted fourteen years, and above all to leave the dear Mother Superior to whom you were so devoted, who was so devoted to you. But as you say, my dear sister, what matters it in what part of the vineyard of the Lord we work, provided we are doing His holy will? And all I have to say is to repeat the beautiful message you sent me in one of the cards: May He whose service is your glory and whose love is your reward, protect and guard you. I am now here in Paris—have been here during the past four months—may soon go to Tours for a month or two—have no idea when I shall return (to

America)—am wholly in the hands of my superiors in that regard. Pray for me that in all things God's holy will may be accomplished in me. Still, in all probability within the coming year I shall return to the United States. But I fear it will be some time before I again see New Orleans. However, there is no telling what the future has in store for us. Whether we meet again in this life matters little. The great thing is that we meet in heaven. And for that you must not cease to pray. Not so much for yourself, however, as for me. I think it will be a great jewel in your crown if, by your prayers, you succeed in getting me a little corner in the heavenly mansions. . . . Neither you nor dear parents need worry about me. I am well and happy, and very busy. I am actually writing another book, and I wish you to storm heaven in its behalf this time also. I shall not forget you as soon the other book is out. . . . I need not wish you happiness in your new home. The Sister of Charity is happy everywhere. I must leave you in a few minutes to continue my researches in the great library of Paris, among dusty, hard, dry, old volumes. Your brother,

AZARIAS.

He writes to his sister from London a little later, hinting at a change which he found in himself in spite of his returning health and the hope of seeing his country again.

*In Mammoth London.*

DEAR SISTER:—I received your kind and affectionate letter. I need not tell you what a treat it was to me in this land of exile to get such a nice, chatty letter.

My letter-writing days are past. I can no longer sit down and pour out my thoughts upon the page as I used in former days. The fountains of thought seem to be drying up. Outside my books, or the subjects I study, I find myself growing daily more and more stupid. When I go into society I have nothing but the most commonplace remarks to make. When I write a letter I find myself at a loss what to say beyond the mere object of the letter. Here is the difficulty I feel in writing to you at this moment. . . . Yesterday I went to see a tournament of soldiers and was greatly entertained. The horses danced several sets of quadrilles to music, the men performed the most wonderful feats of gymnastics, the soldiers drilled beautifully, and it all wound up in a sham battle, in which cannons were booming, a bridge was thrown across a sham river, a sham fortification was taken, and so on. They had an ambulance corps, and picked up the dead and wounded. But I missed the Sister of Charity from the battlefield. Had it been a real one she would have been there. . . . And now what else shall I say to you this beautiful Sunday morning, when everything is so bright, and a calm and sweet peace has settled upon this mammoth London? What shall I say except to wish you that peace which the world cannot give, and with fondest love to remain, your affectionate brother,

AZARIAS.

He was a little more cheerful, but still in the blues, when he wrote the following from a nationalist stronghold in Ireland.



*Thoughts of Jail.*

. . . I am very busy. I have been just drawing up a set of resolutions for a monster meeting to be held next Sunday here in Tipperary. There will be at least fifteen thousand people present, with several members of Parliament. I may have the honor of being put in jail for my pains. Think of it,—a plank bed and bread and water for three months! Won't it be grand? But I'm just as badly faring at present. I am suffering from a very ugly trouble, and must live on barley-water and boiled milk for six weeks perhaps. Is not that encouraging? And I in Ireland. . . I'm still in the blues, and I don't know when I shall get out of them. As ever,

AZARIAS.

From his notes of travel three are selected as characteristic of his faith, his literary life, and his sorrows.

*An Audience with Leo XIII.*

It was a bright Sunday morning in October. I was one among a privileged few who wended their way to the Vatican. I assisted at Mass celebrated by the Pope in his private chapel. Never shall I forget the piety and devotion with which the venerable Pontiff went through the impressive ceremonies. I had the unspeakable happiness of receiving communion from his hands, and afterwards knelt at his feet to receive his benediction. There were assembled in the chapel people from the ends of the earth, bringing to the father of the faithful a loving homage; ladies of fashion

curious to see and to hear; nuns bound for distant missions, come to ask the blessing which of old Gregory gave Augustine; hard-working priests from the American wilderness, breathing prayers for their far-off fields of labor. Near me knelt a pious family from Australia, feeling, after their tour of the world, that this scene was the climax. . . . I looked upon all this with a mingled feeling of reverence, awe, and love, as a fitting homage to the vicar of Christ. The venerable old man, bending under the weight of his years, was to me the successor of Peter, and the link in a long chain of benefactors of mankind, the greatest the world has ever seen. I forgot his years in the perennial youth of the church which he represents. I forgot the infirmities of his age in the strength he gives to all nations, in the power centred in his venerable person. The great Church is worthily ruled by him. He is a scholar. He is a patron of learning. He has revived the study of St. Thomas. Rather, he has given it a new impetus. He has opened to the scholar the archives of the Vatican. He is himself a student and a poet. As a statesman he stands foremost among the men of his time.

*Pope's Garden.*

Thursday, May 11th.—A day with Father English at Twickenham. Mr. Labouchere is now the proprietor of what was once called Pope's home. Went over the grounds. Mused over the Thames. Was in the grotto. It has two side-chambers,—one with a very peculiar marble statue of the Blessed Virgin. These are said to be just as Pope left them. The statue shows that he did not either forget or despise

the religion of his parents. The spring seems no longer to flow. The grotto is curiously inlaid with small stone. It looks very fine, picturesque, and artificial, like Pope's poetry. He was the first to plant the willow-tree in England. The trunk of this first willow is preserved in the grotto.

*Stratford-on-Avon.*

October 29th.—From Newman to Shakespeare, from the great master of English in the nineteenth century to the birthplace and home of the great poet of all time. Stood in the room where he was born. Sat in the kitchen where he often sat, in the very niche within the fire-place where he studied his lessons, or listened to the wonderful tales which he afterwards so happily used in his great plays. There he listened to the strolling players that might have taken refuge in his father's house. There looking into the blazing fire, he built many a fine picture of wicked giants, of ladies in distress, of powerful knights coming to their rescue. Such were the romances of his day. Entered the Shakespeare museum. Saw the various busts and pictures of the clay vessel from which his genial soul sent out his messages of infinite worth to the world. There is his desk. There too is the chair in which he is supposed to have sat when presiding over the club of which Aubrey makes mention. I sat in it and mused over the bouts between himself and "rare Ben Jonson" and so many others. There is preserved the jug out of which he quaffed his wine, and from which Garrick drank at the celebration of his centenary. Sat in the school to which he went daily, where he studied and

played his boyish pranks, and received his due allowance of birching. One scholar declares he was not birched more than once a month. Went to his last resting-place and read upon the stone that covers his remains the solemn warning not to touch his bones,—a warning that proved not untimely, for the question has been mooted of digging up the bones to take measurement of the cranium whose brain thought out such beautiful thoughts.

Did he die a Catholic? Had he the rites of the church? That will never be known. We have his last will and testament. It proves nothing. Saw the record of his baptism in the parish register. It is a certified copy taken from scraps, and made out in manner uncanonical. It is without name of mother or sponsors, or priest administering the sacrament. I know not how he died, but I said for his soul a prayer while standing over his remains. Lunched at the Red Horse Inn where Washington Irving stopped. Entered an old curiosity shop, and asked for relics of Shakespeare. The old man told me solemnly that very few relics of his existed, and none was lying around loose. True enough. Of all that is in the museum, not a single word written by himself, not even his autograph, of which the only specimen known is in the British Museum. Little there is by which we can track and touch his personality. He has diffused and lost himself in his great works. It comes home to me that I touched the baptismal fonts, at which the waters of baptism were poured upon the heads of the two greatest poets of modern times. The one was the grand baptistery in Florence, where Dante was baptized, the other the font, now a mere

fragment lying near his grave, at which was baptized Shakespeare.

This chapter can be profitably closed by a selection from his latest letters, written during his stay at De La Salle Institute.

*His Friends.*

DEAR FRIEND:—I suppose you are beginning to imagine that I am going to forget my promise to write. I can never, never forget the friends who stood by me when I needed a friend. . . . The house here fronts on Central Park, and the scenery from the windows is to my near-sightedness almost a reproduction of the glen below the (Rock Hill) College. There are the trees scattered about in the same manner. There is the Quaker Hill with the pine trees. More than once I have shifted my position to take a look at your house, only to remember a moment later that I am two hundred miles away from the spot. . . .

NEW YORK, March, 1889.

*A Certain Portrait.*

DEAR FRIEND:—Let me for a moment wish you a very happy Christmas and a thrice happy New Year, and many returns of the holy season. It is the season when we think of our friends with renewed affection, and remember our enemies without gall or bitterness. It is a season of peace and good-will to all, and we must let no other sentiment than that of kindly feeling toward all fill our hearts. . . . Let us all pray for one another that we may not fail in being

saved through the coming of the Saviour whom we celebrate. I know for my part that I often mention your names in my prayers. I assure you I have not forgotten you and your kindness through so many years. And I never shall. You will be pleased to know that my health is keeping up admirably, and that I am much stouter than when you last saw me. And yet I am working hard. I do not know whether you saw the picture the papers gave of me recently. I do not know where they got it, but it looked horrid, and not at all like me. And though they had nice things to say about me, and even flattering things, the picture spoiled everything. My friends have had many a good joke since then at my expense.

NEW YORK, Christmas, 1890.

*Honors in New York.*

DEAR FRIENDS:—I wished to drop you all a Christmas greeting, but *la grippe* took hold of me, held me down, and kept me from sending greetings to my friends. And then it occurs to me that perhaps my friends have had enough of me, and that my silence may be more welcome than my letters. . . . It is rather late to wish you the compliments of the season, but it is never too late to wish you the choicest blessings of God. May they all be yours! . . . Brother Patrick is with me here. He told me that he called to see you and to thank you for all your kindness to me. I thought I would have been able to thank you all in person long before this. I am very happy here, and am surrounded with all the care and consideration and honor that I could desire. I have more in-



vitations abroad than I can possibly comply with. I have not sent you the papers speaking of my lectures and writings, because I thought they would only bore you. I have not quite given up all hope of being your neighbor once more. Even the siren voice and the flattery of New York cannot wean me from the old "Rock," and the tried and true and faithful friends whom I left there.

JANUARY, 1890.

*A Spiritual Telephone.*

DEAR SISTER:—A merry Christmas to you this bright and beautiful morning, and a thrice happy New Year, and ever so many returns of both. How are you this morning? Are you well? Did you hear midnight Mass? We had one here, at which I communicated. And I did not forget you in my poor prayers, and I am sure you did not forget me when communing with our dear Lord. What a blessed thing it is to be able to converse with each other so often through His Sacred Heart! Is it not a species of spiritual telephone? I suppose that is why you write to me so seldom. I am sure you owe me a letter, but I shall not quarrel with you this morning over that. This is the season of peace and good-will. We must all live in peace. We must forgive our enemies. Life is too short to spend any portion of it nursing ill-feeling toward any one. . . . You know, dear sister, that I am always with you in spirit, and not at all worried about you, because I know that you are in the hands of our dear Lord. May you always remain in His safe keeping.

CHRISTMAS, 1890.

*The Death of His Parents.*

DEAR SISTER:—It is my sad duty to write you from our bereaved home a letter laden with our common sorrow, but no less laden with many consolations. Our dear parents are gone to their well-earned reward. Both passed away calmly and peacefully. Our dear mother's death was especially sweet and peaceful. The smile upon her face after death was heavenly. She had the great consolation of receiving both our Christmas letters on Christmas day. They were read to her over and over again, and she felt as though she had us present with her. We were certainly there in spirit. Christmas, as you know, was her birthday, and she really made it a day of rejoicing. She insisted upon Father Lynch coming out to dinner that day. He brought her feast to her in the form of the Holy Viaticum. Father was anointed and received the Viaticum at the same time. Father Lynch said that the sight of these two dear souls receiving their Lord with such edification was one of the most beautiful he had ever witnessed. Father's voice could be heard through the house reciting the confiteor and saying the acts. When Father Lynch told mother that she was good for another year, she replied, "No, Father, this is the day of all days that I would like to die on; for it's the birthday of our Lord and mine too. I hope for greater mercy from Him." In this spirit of resignation did she live till Saturday morning, when her sweet soul passed away. Father's agony was more prolonged. When I came to his bedside he revived for a day or two, but after returning from dear mother's funeral on Wednesday we

found him in his death-agony. He was conscious to the last moment and expired peacefully as we were saying the prayers for the agonizing. We placed his remains in the vault beside mother's. Cardinal Gibbons wrote me a beautiful letter of condolence. All our friends in Utica were at the funerals. In everything connected with the passing away of our dear parents, there is not an incident that we cannot recall with sad pleasure, and is not that a consolation to us?

DEERFIELD, January, 1892.

Concerning this touching passage of the venerable pair into eternity he wrote later to his sister that "the shock of our dear parents' death was very great, but there was much to console us in their passing away, and we would not want them back with us again. God knows what is best for us. May His holy will be done in all things." From an old school-friend, the novelist Harold Frederic, he received a brief letter of sympathy.

MY DEAR AZARIAS:—Believe that no friend, of all those who loved the old Deerfield home, has been more deeply touched and grieved by the double calamity than I have been. I speak for my wife as well, in all I say. We had read the news in *The Observer* before your letter came. It was good of you to think of us in your sorrow, and we love you for it. Pray write me again, telling me how your sisters are. Give to them and to Father John the assurances of our most affectionate sympathy. Always all yours,

HAROLD FREDERIC.

LONDON, February, 1892.

From two letters I take the following interesting paragraphs. "This is the feast-day of our Blessed Founder, John Baptist De La Salle. Pray that God may give me the grace to live and die one of his children. . . . I am so glad you were pleased with my little book. I am getting out another just now. I want you to pray that it may do good, and perhaps I may send you a copy if I see that your prayer is heard. The next one is the most important in my life, and contains my best thoughts on many subjects." Of the "little book" mentioned, which was the short essay on "Books and Reading," he wrote again: "The magazines and journals have said very kind things both of the book and of the author. I have not written a big book, but I tried to say everything in the best manner I could command. If I had the pen of an angel I could not do justice to the subject. I have just sent off the last proof-sheets of another book that is being published for me by the largest firm in Boston. The enclosed circular will tell you the nature of the book. Pray that God may bless it. It will be largely read by non-Catholics, and I hope that they will recognize the Catholic truth that I have given them. . . . Our path through life is strewn with sorrow. We all must learn to suffer and endure. It is all a mystery to us, but one day it will be made plain."

He wrote to his sister on Monday of Holy Week, his last Holy Week on this earth: "This is a bright and beautiful Monday morning. Palm Sunday was also very bright and beautiful. But the winter has been very severe, and bright days are hailed with joy by people in the North. Ever so many sought

warmth and comfort in the South. For myself I cannot complain. I have kept up wonderfully all this winter. I have been doing much writing, and some hard work. I am preparing another book for which I ask your prayers in a special manner. I also ask you to pray that some lectures I am to deliver this spring and summer may do good and tend to God's honor and glory. I know and feel that you are not forgetting us this holy season in your prayers."

I conclude this selection from the letters of Brother Azarias with one which displays all his hopefulness, his cheery and ambitious spirit, and his love for his friends. It was among the last which he wrote, only a few weeks before his death.

*Old Friends.*

DEAR FRIEND:—I do not know if you have forgotten Brother Azarias, or if you remember him only as a dream of the long ago. I wrote you many months ago, but received no answer. Was it that my letters failed to reach you, or yours to reach me, or that you had no reply to make? I must confess that I still think of you and your family as my dear old friends, and not a day passes that you do not come up to my mind. I fear that I shall have to continue in this old-fashioned way of keeping you all recorded on memory's tablets as my very best and very dearest friends. I know it is not just the thing to keep so long the remembrance of people who are now so far away and so long out of sight. But I am old-fashioned in many ways. And whether I hear from you or not, I shall persist in counting you all

as the dearest and best friends I have known or care to know. So once for all I wish you to know where you stand in my remembrance. . . . This is a very busy summer with me. I have much work on hand between philosophical congress, Catholic congress, educational congress, and summer school; with a special course that I am to deliver to non-Catholic friends in the Adirondacks. But I always find time to think of my friends, and I could find occasion to go out of my way to see them, if I thought it likely that we might meet this summer. Your friend,

BROTHER AZARIAS.

NEW YORK, July, 1893.

Of the engagements mentioned in this letter he fulfilled only two: at the summer class of philosophy in the Adirondacks, and at the Catholic summer school. The time intended for the congresses in Chicago was taken up by sickness and death.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE LONG RETREAT.

No one can read the achievements of Brother Azarias in the intellectual and educational field without admiration for the indomitable pluck that could accomplish so much under circumstances so unfavorable. Ill-health, the cares and duties of a responsible position, the many obligations to be filled toward others, are not at all helpful to the literary man, for whom leisure and liberty are prime necessities. Yet he managed to keep up his studies and to send forth year after year the scholarly essays which excited the admiration of the best thinkers of the day. Moreover, he collected much material for future books, and had planned a scheme of work which, within a few years, would have enriched our literature with three or four volumes more. His stay of two years in Europe, from 1886 to 1888, was spent largely in the libraries of Paris and London and in the society of the learned men with whom he made acquaintance there. In no city did he ever remain a week without regular visits to the libraries, where he delighted and astonished the officials by the character of the volumes required for his investigations. Your veteran librarian is an enthusiast, whose gods of the hearthstone are his uncalled-for and precious books; and he is ready to worship that student who sprin-

kles the incense of attention at the shrines of the neglected and unknown. Wherever Brother Azarias went he stirred these enthusiasts to the extent of levying upon all libraries within a hundred-mile radius, in order that he might be provided with the proper books. Most of the material for his book on the schools of the Middle Ages was gathered in Parisian libraries, and much of it in the British Museum; gathered with that patience and care and exactness whose choicest fruit is seen in his powerful and apposite quotations from the authors of the past. On mediæval subjects he had the field to himself in the United States, where our ablest writers on special subjects mostly take the popular theory of Catholic ancient times for granted.

However, the true life of the monk is not centred in his intellectual development. Having seen to what heights Brother Azarias raised himself by patient study, and what rich culture he secured for his mind by his clear and generous methods in the pursuit of knowledge, it is only just that a single chapter should be devoted to an account of his progress in the life of the soul, the only true life for any human being, and the chief love of him who has vowed his life to God. He has left us the record of one of his retreats in the shape of notes jotted down to refresh his own soul later on in the matters of meditation, and to remind himself of the resolutions taken in the moments of deep thought or high enthusiasm. There is nothing original in them, nor have they the literary grace of his essays. They were written for his own eye alone, and have the brevity, abruptness, in consequence, peculiar to such things. Their great value in the

present instance is the light which they cast upon his soul, displaying the development of the spirit within him from the day of his entrance into the religious life up to the hour of his departure from Rock Hill. The retreat thus minutely described was made in a house of his Institute at Athis, outside of Paris, and lasted thirty days. During that time he lived with his brethren in perpetual silence, in regular fastings, in the daily exercise of meditation, prayer, self-examination, spiritual reading and instruction from the preacher of the retreat and the director who led the Brothers. The matter of the note-books has been arranged, and selections made, with a view both to interest the reader and to show the course of his meditations, with their fruits in special resolutions.

*Part I.—Jesus Christ.*

1. It is time for you to make up your mind definitely and irrevocably under which standard you are going to combat during the remainder of your poor, short, miserable life. There are two standards: the standard of Satan, who stands in the city of confusion, proud, defiant, eager to capture you to be his slave. He offers you certain inducements. He holds out to you golden promises which he has never fulfilled. And once he has made you his slave he lets you eat the bread of bitterness, and finally rewards you—how?—with the torments of hell! This is your sole reward, this is the condition on which you join his standard—eternal despair. . . . You object to the reward promised. You recoil before the disorder. So do a great many at the first blush. But after a while they get used to it, and learn to live

comfortably in despair. . . . But the torments, the eternal torments? Oh, you must set those aside. You might even try to persuade yourself that there is no hell, no torments, no hereafter. But you can't do that. Reason proclaims the contrary too loudly. Well, then, give up all thought of joining that standard. Remain in your present quarters, which are too good for you. Consider them a moment: the standard of Jesus Christ. Here all is order, all is peace and calm, and possession of soul. The Great Leader is all meekness and humility. He has given His life for all, even for His enemies. He asks privations and sufferings in this life, but promises free liberty of spirit, and freedom from passion's thrall. He gives consolations of the purest kind. He fills souls with joy ineffable. . . . And then the life hereafter is to be one of joy supreme and love intense. Heaven is the prize. He asks of us nothing that He has not done Himself. He asks nothing that human nature cannot endure. He asks no sacrifice that He does not reward an hundredfold. Let there be no further hesitation. Enlist at once in the service of hope. Detach yourself from everything that savors of the enemy. You have become so entangled in his snares that you are scarcely aware of the danger in which you stand.

2. The apostles are crossing the sea. A storm arises. Jesus walks upon the waters. The apostles dread the appearance as a phantom. St. Peter first recognizes his Lord and Master, and asks Him to bid him come to Him. St. Peter throws himself into the sea and walks till fear takes possession of him, he loses confidence, and forthwith he begins to sink.

But he appeals to Jesus and Jesus helps him. In my efforts to become what I have never been, a spiritual man, I shall find myself on the point of sinking. I may even go to the bottom more than once, but may I always have the grace to call upon Jesus. . . . When I look back and see how merciful He has been toward me, from how much He has shielded and saved me, I can certainly hope that He will aid me, now that I am making an effort to do right. I must be what He requires me to be; what my Institute requires me to be; what the Church, society, and the pupils require me to be; and what good men, even what bad men, expect to find in me.

3. I have been at the grave of Lazarus and I have admired the power, the goodness, the love of Jesus. I have seen in Lazarus dead, corrupting in the tomb, a type of the soul dead in sin. It is only the love of Jesus that brings Him to raise me out of my sins. The stone must be removed from the grave. The bonds of bad habit must be burst. Then only can I hear the voice of Jesus, and hearing, then only can I obey. Here I am after so many days given to meditation and prayer, full of vain thoughts, and in spirit walking in the paths that lead to the valley of death. Oh, who will burst the bonds? Who will give me the wings of a dove that I may fly away from evil thoughts and vain suggestions that beset me? But I forget. I forget that there is no spiritual life without a spiritual struggle, that this alone is the condition under which I can rise. I must begin by conquering myself. If there were no temptations, there would be no struggle.

4. *Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane.* He prays

. . . an angel comforts Him. He feels strong again. He is not consoled, but He is comforted. And He says *Fiat*. It is the *Fiat* of Redemption. . . . This must be my life. No matter what the difficulty in the way of duty, no matter how painful the sacrifice, I must say, "Father, not my will, but Thine be done," and forthwith set out to do the duty even though death be the end. . . . *Jesus before Pilate*. They cannot find a witness to condemn Him. He is above accusation. Ah! so should it be with us! *Jesus before Herod*. He is silent. The murderer of John the Baptist—Herod the adulterer, the sensual man—was not worthy that Jesus should speak to him. What a terrible thing it would be for us if we were to find ourselves in that condition, that Jesus would refuse to speak to us—if He would cease to rebuke us for our sins—if He would allow our consciences to lie dormant when we were guilty of great sins. No, dear Jesus! always speak to me, reproach me—give me no peace till I arise and return to Thee with full heart and soul. Not half-way. Not with dread lest I might do too much for Thee—but in full generosity of heart. Thou lovest the cheerful giver and a divided heart Thou wilt not have. I recall that St. Peter denied his Master. He who had said that all the world might abandon Christ, but he, never! It was presumption. He relied too much upon his own strength. He who says, such a one may fall, but I, never! may be very near a greater fall.

5. *Jesus scourged and crowned*. Think—try to realize for a moment—how antagonistic to sin is the sanctity of Jesus—what a horror His soul has for it; and then remember that through all His sufferings He



thought of your sins, and, while His flesh quivered under the lash, his soul shuddered in taking upon itself the burden of your iniquity. And thus there is a twofold agony going on within Him. And the only cry is the pleading cry from soul to soul that has come down the ages and now enters your heart, the cry from His soul to your soul to be converted and live, and to let not His sufferings be in vain; the cry to you to remember that the stripes inflicted on His soul by your sins, black and grievous and full of stinging malice, pierce Him with far greater pain than the wounds inflicted on His sacred flesh. Jesus is condemned to death. The compromising policy of Pilate, the diplomacy exercised with so great care, has all come to naught. He finds himself in the same breath declaring Jesus innocent, and handing Him over to the Jews to be crucified. Alas! how like a cobweb is all human policy, when it is in the way of God's designs! Here is a point for you to take seriously to heart. Rely not on human policy. You have found it vanish like Pilate's before God's designs and God's justice. Do you know why your designs failed, why your life is in a measure a failure? Simply because you were building houses that the Lord had no share in, and they became wrecks. And it will be the same again if you do not throw yourself entirely into the hands of God.

6. *Jesus on the cross.* Stand beside His mother. He gives her to you for your mother. She is your shield, your refuge, your protector,—in a word your mother. My friend, she has been more than a mother to you. To her you are indebted, after her Divine Son, for being here now, with the opportunity

to redeem the past and to begin life anew. All I can say is: Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Jesus says: all is consummated. Yes, His is a perfect work. Nothing can be added to it. His Church is established on earth. The seeds of His doctrine are sown. He has expiated my sins. Man is redeemed. The victim is sacrificed. He has sanctified the cross. He has sanctified sorrow and suffering. He has made humiliation honorable, poverty a treasure, persecution a grace, retirement from the world a special privilege, and the contrary of what the world esteems and honors truly great. In the bitterness of His own death He has made sweet the deaths of all the saints.

Mary at the foot of the cross. There she stands, the sorrowful mother, gazing upon her Son, noting every wound, feeling in her own tender body every pang that Jesus felt. Remember all the love of a mother for her son. Remember that the least pang in the body of a child brings anguish to the compassionate heart of a tender mother. Now think of Mary—the tenderest of mothers—the most feeling, delicate, and sensitive of women. And there she stands gazing upon her Son, cold and rigid in death. What a sword of sorrow has pierced her heart! . . . O Mary! my sins added to that desolation of spirit in which He died. But thy charity is excelled only by the charity of Jesus, and not only hast thou forgiven me, but thou hast taken me to thy bosom, and, as the refuge of sinners, hast become my protector, my mother, my shield, against the Divine Justice which I have so often provoked. O Mary! let the wounds of Jesus penetrate my heart. Let me suffer

with Jesus—for Jesus—in Jesus. And let Jesus be my strength in all temptation and trial.

7. *The resurrection.* On this day the soul rises with Jesus, and rejoices in His escape from the grave. The soul rises from the corruption of sin, leaves behind it the grave-clothes of bad habits, and enters upon a life of faith and labor. Look upon the holy women coming early in the morning to embalm Jesus, their eagerness, their simple faith, which stops not at obstacles—a result of that faith. They find all obstacles removed. This is God's way with His servants. They go about their work in perfect confidence, look neither to the right nor left, ask no human agencies for aid. They rely upon God's providence, and it is never wanting to them. My friend, why can you not have this full confidence? Why do you dread the future? You are weak, but you are not undertaking to reform your life by your own light. If you were, you would soon fall, and your second state would be worse than the first. Have confidence in God, and He will carry you through all difficulties. Consider the conduct of Jesus in this time. He has words of meekness and kindness for all: Fear not—it is I—Peace: these are His usual expressions—words inspiring confidence, breathing charity, bearing peace. This should be my life as a superior. I should have charity for all my Brothers, inspire them with confidence, bring peace to them. This must be my life in the future. Not only should I lead this life because I am an avowed disciple of Jesus, but also because I owe it to my community, to my neighbors, and to my friends. I am bound to an edifying life. Jesus, Mary, Jo-

seph, be with me in this new life I am resolved to lead.

From these considerations of the life of Jesus he is enabled to draw certain conclusions with regard to his own dignity as a Christian man, his office as a Christian teacher, and the special duties of the religious life. He gives us these in his own words, which it is worth while to quote from with discretion.

*Part II.—The Spiritual Man.*

1. In St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians, the fourth chapter, I find the image of the perfect man. The man who gives no offence that he may not cause the ministry to be abused or vilified, exercising great patience under all manner of trials, chaste, learned in true science, enduring all, suffering all, filled with the Holy Ghost, unfeigned in charity, truthful in word, strong in the might and justice of God, alike in praise and glory and infamy, considered ignorant, yet knowing all, considered a seducer of men, yet truthful in word and work, as sad yet rejoicing, as having nothing yet possessing all. . . . And he ends with the sublime truth: you are the temple of the living God. . . . What a grand sketch! Here is a mirror for you to look into frequently. You cannot examine yourself in it too often.

Alas! it is not your picture that is traced! But now is the time of grace for you to study it carefully and in all things to conform yourself to it. You are the temple of the living God. His Holy Spirit dwells within you. You are the tabernacle into which His Divine Son enters at least twice a week.

Oh, how pure and well-ordered should not everything be in a receptacle so sacred! With what care should I not preserve that tabernacle! What respect should I not have for it! How I should guard it against every emotion that would tend to banish Jesus therefrom! How carefully I should rule all the affections of the heart, and love all things in and for God! Alas! I have been so selfish in my affections, I have been loving all things only in so far as I found them good for self. Now I find it difficult to love otherwise. "Create a new heart in me, O God, and renew an upright spirit within my bowels."

2. The dignity of the Christian Brother. He represents religion for the child, who will love religion only according as the Brother loves his Master. He represents the Church. As he explains the teaching of the Church so will the child have for it a liking or a disgust. He represents God. He speaks to the child with the authority of God, in the name of the religion, the revelation, and the Church of God. And if he leaves in the child only harsh impressions of himself, the child will make inferences equally harsh of God, of religion, of the Church.

3. The call of God. I feel my weaknesses and shortcomings more and more. But also I feel that with God's grace I can raise myself above them. God has called me to so noble a mission, and I have debased it so greatly! But now I know, or at least I have a glimpse of that mission, and I shall henceforth seek to live up to it. I am called to be an apostle! Ah, how much is contained in that word! . . . I am called to be a man of God, therefore to be in constant communion with God, to be occupied solely with the

affairs of God, to live in God and for God. I am called to be a man of souls; therefore to deal with souls exclusively in order to gain them for God. Woe to me if, instead of gaining them for Him, I attract them to myself! What a pitiful robbery is that! . . .

I am called to be a perfect man, seeking perfection in sanctity that I may be a worthy instrument in the hands of God to do His work in a worthy manner. It is evident that if I am not virtuous myself I cannot make others virtuous. If I have not the grace and holiness of my state, my words will make but little impression. A cold body cannot give out heat, nor a dark body communicate light; neither can a sensual man inspire a love of chastity, nor a proud man teach others to be humble. How can I inspire those under me with a horror for sin, if I have not that horror myself? O my God! I find that I must begin my life over. I must set a disordered household in order. I must start with the first principles of sanctification. Mary, I place the work under your protection! And I accept with full heart the first degree of grace: that of never deliberately entertaining a thought of committing a voluntary venial sin. I shall drive from me at once such a temptation as unworthy a Christian, still more a religious.

4. The spirit of penance. This is essential to the religious life. Without it there is no religious life. There must be expiation for one's sins and the sins of others. Religious men are victims of expiation for the whole world. Mortification is the road to cheerfulness, to content, to peace of soul, to holiness of life. It is a great means of overcoming tempta-



tion. All sin requires expiation. The greater the number of sinners, the greater the expiation called for. This is an absolute law in the order of providence. There is no escaping it. If not in this life, then it must be undergone in the next. . . . *The Rule.* This is the barrier hedging in a religious against the snares of the world, the devil, and the flesh. The one road of salvation for him is the observance of the rule. Its violation is the cause of scandals, falls, and the loss of vocation. . . . *The regular examination.* In proportion as one is earnest in this exercise, he is earnest in overcoming himself, and in advancing in virtue. But it must be searching. Not content with noting the faults, it must discover the circumstances that breed the faults, foresee the occasions that give rise to them, and be prepared to resist them. . . .

*Religious perfection.* To this our vows bind us. We are not required to be perfect, but we are bound to seek perfection. We must mount, mount, all the time. There is no rest for the religious. His is a lifelong struggle. He never can say with him in the gospel: Enough, my soul, let us now take our ease. The moment he utters that word, he has begun to fail in the first law, in the very essence of the religious life. . . . *Humility.* We must seek by preference humiliation rather than honor, poverty rather than riches, suffering rather than pleasure. I cannot be a saint without arriving at this degree of humility. I cannot reach it on human, I must reach it on supernatural motives. It is a folly, if you will—but a folly of which my Lord has been guilty, the folly which brought Him into the manger of Bethlehem,

and led Him to the cross on Calvary. I pretend to imitate Him. . . . And yet in this holy season I am niggardly in giving my heart to God, that He may do with it what He pleases. I seem to forget that having been guilty of great sins I must do great penances for them. And why not undertake these penances voluntarily? How much better this is than to have greater humiliations thrust upon you from without! But this fact should not influence you. My God, I am in thy hands. Punish me as Thou deemest best. Spare me not, but let me receive Thy chastisements as from the hand of a loving Father, and not as the sentence of a stern judge.

*Part III.—Resolutions.*

1. This week is to be devoted to the confirming and completing of my resolutions. From frequent meditation upon Jesus suffering and dying, I shall draw the grace and strength to carry them out. Who can consistently refuse to make a sacrifice in the presence of the Divine Victim, shrinking from no pain of body or soul—for us—in expiation of our sins—to save us? While meditating upon the Passion I shall review and restate my resolutions in the light thrown on them by the counsel of the director of the retreat. The great fruit I am to derive from this season of retirement is to live henceforth a supernatural life. For this end I shall make frequent meditation upon the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and the love of Him. I shall often seek refuge in His Sacred Heart. He is the centre of all spiritual life, the source of all grace. Only through Jesus as revealed to me in the holy gospels, can I ever attain

that degree of holiness and perfection that belongs to the religious state.

2. I must remove the obstacles in the way of attaining that perfection to which I am called. These obstacles are: (1) Pride; I shall therefore make my particular examen on pride in all its manifestations, and shall seek to acquire purity of intention in all I do and say, striving to do all for God. (2) Sensuality; I shall therefore seek to keep myself chaste in thought, word, and deed, by practising a mild and steady mortification of the senses. I shall hedge myself in by a faithful observance of my rule, especially in all that regards my relations with others. I shall do penance. My feeble constitution seems to be in the way of my doing great acts of mortification, but these things I can do: I shall wear the cincture or bracelet twice a week; I shall make some sacrifices at each principal meal; on all occasions mortify my eyes; be regular in attendance at every exercise of the community, unless too ill to be out of bed, which shall be my only excuse; and I shall take care to edify my Brothers by my regularity. For this end I shall pay no visit in the neighborhood of the house alone, but shall always have a Brother with me. I shall pay no useless visits. I shall always have something useful to fill up my time, spending none of it frivolously or in idleness, constantly keeping in mind the parable of the five talents. I am now too old to lose time. My life is advancing too fast to spend a moment of it uselessly. I shall therefore work with method. I shall regulate my hours for study and writing, for class and community duties, in such a manner as that nothing will suffer.

3. I have to construct within me the whole spiritual life. I find myself lost in vanity of spirit. I must therefore make my particular examen rigorously, must never speak of myself unless to my superiors. My intentions, my deeds, my writings, honors conferred and the like, I shall never mention unless asked about them by those who have the right to ask. I shall not seek honors, or the things that bring notoriety, knowing myself now to be unworthy of confidence or consideration. I must endeavor to repair the past by working honestly, energetically, according to rule, and suppressing all thoughts of vanity in whatever apparent successes may attend my work. For the reconstruction of the spiritual man I shall let no day pass without giving a half-hour, morning and evening, to meditation; at least so long as I am able to be out of bed and to think I shall make spiritual reading daily for not less than a quarter of an hour. I shall pray steadily for the grace to obtain perseverance in these practices.

4. I find myself lacking greatly in the apostolic spirit. I must cultivate a greater love for souls, and a spirit of charity and zeal toward my Brothers and students. Toward my Brothers, I shall watch over their spiritual progress with great care, carefully consider their needs and provide for them, be very kind to the sick of body and soul, and refuse them nothing which I grant myself. Toward the students, I shall teach catechism in one or another class at least twice a month, look more closely after their moral and religious welfare, keep before their minds the value of their souls and the necessity of sanctifying them, and have a reasonable supervision over their reading.

5. Whatever I write shall be through obedience. I shall always seek to have purity of intention. Here I find little to reform. I have been careful in my statements. I have consulted the wisest and most learned. I have the confidence of the bishops. I have the confidence of the cultured. And so far I have never been tempted to abuse that confidence. I thank God for the talent He has given me, and I beg Him to bless it, and also for the grace never to forget that this talent belongs to Him and not to me. Perhaps henceforth I might make my writings less speculative and material, more spiritual and practical. In all things I must keep in mind that I am here first and above all to save my soul, and secondly to help others save theirs. The will of God is clearly laid down for me in my rules, which are the most direct road of sanctification for me. Knowing how weak I am, how incapable of a single good thought without God's grace, I shall cherish toward myself a total want of confidence to carry out the least of these resolutions, placing all my confidence in God alone, and, after Him, in the assistance of Mary, the Mother. If I am to do the work of God at all, I must not do it negligently, but with clean hands, a pure heart with simplicity of purpose and intention. On these conditions alone does God bless any work done in His service. Give me, O my God, the grace and strength to carry out these resolutions—fully, generously, courageously—for Thy glory and my own sanctification. Mary, Mother of God, may you be with me now and always, above all at the hour of my death, Amen.

The last words of the note-book are:

God is not only love, He is also beauty transcending all beauty; He is goodness transcending all goodness. . . . All other beauty is but the faintest shadow of that which is of the very essence of God. All other goodness is but a fragment, small and pitiful of the infinite goodness of God. And yet, consider how much goodness there is in the world. Not a human heart now beating that has not its natural goodness. No matter how great the criminal . . . how hardened the sinner . . . there is in his heart somewhere a spot of goodness. . . .

The spirit which breathes in these outpourings of his soul is so simple, so beautiful, so strong, that comment would but spoil its first impressions on the reader's mind. The picture which it provides of the inner man is perfect, as the friends of Brother Azarias knew him in his last years; gentle, patient in physical and mental suffering, without one word of reproach or criticism against others. When he penned the journal of this retreat he was entering upon his fortieth year, the age at which life has lost all its illusions for serious men. Whatever illusions he might still have unconsciously cherished, sickness rudely destroyed. One lung was already useless, the heart was overtaxed, and depression of spirit seized upon him. It was found necessary to send him to his friends in Ireland and afterward to England. Finally he was ordered to return to America in the summer of 1888, a change which did him more good than the balmiest airs of France could accomplish. He returned laden with the results of his burrowing in the great libraries and with the cheerfulness of a



man who feels life blossoming again like the spring. His stay on earth was to be short enough, a single lustrum; but it was life in the most favorable conditions for him, among the friends of his youth, in his own land, close to the people who could understand him best; and Brother Azarias would not have exchanged those five years for twenty "on India's coral strand."



CHAMPLAIN SUMMER SCHOOL.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### TABLE-TALK.

THE last four years of the life of Brother Azarias were spent in the De La Salle Institute south of Central Park, New York, where I met him in the spring of 1889, under circumstances that had in them something of the ridiculous. I had just arrived in the city to act as chaplain for the De La Salle Institute. The morning after my arrival I was busy unpacking my trunk and ornamenting a mantel with some simple *objets de vertu*, when Brother Azarias softly opened a door and looked in. He had not heard of my arrival the night before, and as the rooms assigned to me had up to that moment remained unoccupied, he must have thought that the servants were fitting it up for the new chaplain. Seeing a priest he apologized for his unwitting intrusion and withdrew. I insisted on his remaining. With the easy impertinence of youth, I had at once concluded that this was one of the brothers employed in the domestic service of the house, for it was class-hour, and all the teachers and officials were at their posts. It was pleasant to be gracious to an insignificant personage like this plain-appearing and humble man, and I spread out all my graces. I showed him with many explanations the few bits of bric-à-brac on the mantel, described their worth, and was surprised that he did

not take that interest in them which might be expected from a domestic. Incidentally he mentioned that he had met a friend of mine in Paris. I speedily reflected that domestics were not in the habit of meeting friends of mine in Paris, and I recalled at the same time that this particular friend had met Brother Azarias in the French metropolis. Excuse me, Brother, said I, but did I catch your name aright? It is Brother Azarias, said he. We shook hands again. I draw a veil over my thoughts of the next five minutes, but the explanation regarding the bric-à-brac was discontinued.

This was the beginning of an affectionate intimacy which had no interruption until his untimely death. He was happily situated in the Institute, free from the responsibilities of office, professing English literature under easy conditions, allowed considerable leisure for his literary work, esteemed and appreciated by his immediate superiors, and surrounded by numerous friends. His health, of course, was precarious. The frequent attacks of pneumonia had practically destroyed one lung, and seriously impaired the other. How he escaped consumption is one of the mysteries of medical science. He was practically condemned to a life of little movement. He could not walk faster than an old lady's pace, and the mounting of a stair left him without breath for some minutes. His little room in the Institute, a rare luxury indeed for a Christian Brother, was two flights up, high enough to discourage too frequent descents to the reception-rooms, whither he was called frequently as his name began to be whispered in New York literary circles. His study was eight

by ten, lighted by a single window which had a dismal view of the back walls of the building and of an elevated railway station. Its furniture was a bed, a desk, and a chair, with such books as he needed in his immediate work. Here he prepared for the press and the platform the essays and lectures of his last years, his class-work, and his plans for the years that were not to be his.

He was a most conscientious worker, the meanest task receiving as serious attention as its nature demanded. To the last he prepared each day's lesson for his boys as if he had never taught the subject before. He was ever jealous of this duty, maintained the interest of his pupils by every method possible, allowed no entrances and exits during his class-hour, and shut off the outside world completely when this work was concerned. His success was commensurate with his care. I have seen rather commonplace boys, who could not be interested in any other study, grow warm with him over Shelley and Tennyson and à Kempis, and get a discriminating taste for these authors. He had the faculty of interesting his pupils in their work, so that the average boy waxed hot, and the true student went enthusiastic over books and authors which send ordinary people to sleep. Much of his leisure time he spent in my quarters. I had a sumptuous apartment on the second floor, with two immense windows overlooking the park, whose green beauties often set us both a-sighing, he after the hills of Maryland, and I over the absent glories of Lake Champlain. It was hard after real sublimities to descend to a single hill with a few bushes, and a pond which hardly made a home for discontented swans!



However, for New York, it was a pleasant location, and we never allowed a curtain on the windows lest any friendly ray of heaven's light might be kept out. Here we discussed the stars of the literary firmament, and the currents of the literary ocean, from Chaucer to Howells, from the Humanists to the Transcendentalists, or transitory-dentists, as we used to call them, from their promiscuous use of tooth-breaking terms. The philosophical and the literary topics were the sole stimuli to his conversational powers. Gossip, politics, art, science, had no particular interest for him. He was always a silent man until his favorite subjects took the floor, when he became eloquent and convincing. For gossip he had a deep and overpowering contempt, even for that higher form of the vice which does not touch character nor wound charity. He did not seem to understand it, so foreign was it to his nature and habits. In the four years I was honored with his friendship he never uttered one word of criticism or condemnation, never told a single fact, never passed a comment, never gave expression to sneer or inuendo which could give pain to any one or reflect on the character of another. He had many honest reasons to be dissatisfied with some of his brethren for their officiousness or over-zeal, he had legitimate excuse to criticise and condemn methods, at least in private, but as far as he was concerned you would never know that a man had blundered, or that his Institute was a human creation. He spoke only of positive and beneficial and creditable things, when he spoke at all of other matters than his studies.

However, he had always with him his human nature, which must have taken much deep enjoyment

over my own unvarnished opinions of all the men and measures then prominent in church and State. In proportion to his reserve and silence was I fluent and flamboyant. The American editor, more so than his European brethren, is an optimist and an iconoclast. It delighted the quiet nature of Brother Azarias to hear my philippics against the things that are but ought not to be. He had broken his toes against those rocks two decades before, and still felt the pain. That experience was ahead of me. His sense of humor was keen, and he chuckled over the bad quarter hours in store for his friend the journalist.

He made it a rule to say as little as possible of himself, his plans, and his work, and he observed the rule almost to the letter. We had much in common besides our profession. I was familiar with the neighborhood of Utica and the class of people which dwelt in the valley of the Mohawk. Harold Frederic has portrayed them in his novels with some sympathy and more fidelity. Our views of most matters were congenial, and discretion was known to be a strong feature of the household. These things did not remove his taciturnity on matters touching himself. As a result the editor did most of the talking, read to him his editorials and essays, over which he fell asleep, or described to him the plot of an absurd play soon to be written, whose situations stirred him to keen interest.

Incapable of the dramatic himself, he could appreciate it in vivid description; but he knew nothing of the drama from experience, and thought the editor's absurd situations fine. They were very much like Mark Twain's attempt at a sensational serial novel,

in which he devised a most interesting situation for his heroine, but one from which no mortal power could rescue her; and then he offered a reward to any novelist who would solve the problem. Journalism was as much beyond Brother Azarias as the drama. Once he was engaged to write pithy notes on questions of the hour for a Catholic journal, but his notes were unsuitable. Each was exact and deep enough for a work of learning, but utterly without the crispness and point so necessary to the journal. He was always in the depths or on the heights, following a thought of Aristotle, or studying the flight of the bards whom he most admired, Shelley, Browning, and Tennyson. His most mirthful moments were when the editor denounced the absurdities of the three and upheld the placid achievements of Longfellow. In discussing the possibilities for another great epic which would leave Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton far behind, he was of the opinion that the great epic of human history would be a summary of the spiritual life; a soul carried through the purgative, illuminative, and unitive conditions, and closing its career in heaven, whose splendid activities would find some description in the poem. | He thought such a poem would be an early result of the world's return to the true Christian life when heresy would have received its eternal *coup de grace*—at least such heresy as blasts the world for centuries at a time, like the Arian or the Protestant.

For him, as for every Catholic, the literary and scientific circles of the great cities, and their leaders and lights, were a never-ending source of amusement, mingled with pity at the prostitution of so much ge-

nious and talent. Paris with its springs of dirt and diabolism, London with its noisy and pretentious literary mob, New York and Boston with their host of banjo-poets and waxwork novelists, all either ignorant of the great Catholic world of thought and its advancing tides, or indifferent to them, taking no account of Catholic principle or progress, disdaining it as worthless and unwholesome, deeming it not worthy even of careless explanation, stirred his wonder and his mirth. He expressed his opinion of them often, wondering that they should take no account of us while we missed no manifestation of life or decay in them. Claiming acquaintance with all knowledge and studying our Augustine, Dante, Aquinas, à Kempis once more, after years of neglect; acknowledging the marvellous vitality of a dying faith, as they regarded it; pessimistic as to their own powers and achievements, though puffed to bursting with conceit; half-conscious that Catholicity was advancing afresh to the old struggle; they could yet close their libraries, their homes, their books, their feelings, their thoughts, to the chance entrance of a single conviction as to this mighty multitude of thinkers and believers, marching with fixed bayonets on the lies and errors of the modern revolutionary fabric, Leo XIII. at their head.

To hear the tinkle of the banjos of New York and London, to read the dead-dough utterances of the critics in the best magazines, to analyze the insipidities of Howells, and Matthews, and their train, while the tread of armies pulsated on the living earth, with the hosts almost in sight of the battlefield, it looked like the absurdities of a dream. He laughed when

these modern writers were named. He did not seem to think them worthy of other attention than to point out their miserable deficiencies, their lack of sincerity, or their blindness. Of Emerson and Lowell he has left in writing his impressions and estimate. Of the writers beneath them he had a poor opinion.

Brownson he admired and kept with reverence an ancient copy of Gioberti which the old philosopher had given him, and whose faded pages bore many marks of the great thinker's pleasantries. This he showed with delight to all who came. For Monsignor Corcoran, the venerable professor at Overbrook who had often advised him during his literary career, he could never speak too often or too long; and he had gathered a little fund of charming reminiscences concerning him, such as the old man's pious habit of rescuing and destroying, for fear of accidental profanation, pictures of holy persons or the Holy Names. The simple piety of such men was matched by his own. Years and the distractions of office had not harmed his simplicity. Though released from the strict observance of the rule of his Institute by reason of his health and his literary labors, he missed no opportunity to observe its spirit and its details as far as he might; and thus it happened that day after day I found him in the chapel performing the spiritual duties which had to be omitted in the earlier hours. His life was one long meditation on the highest things. The exercises of the spiritual life were a natural pleasure to his disposition.

The life which he had chosen in his youth always remained dear to him. I asked him once, as so many have asked their friends among the Brothers, why he

did not become a priest at the beginning, or since, and if he thought the vocation to the teaching life of a lay monk might really be called a vocation. He replied that perhaps his own case fully answered both questions. In his youth he had never felt the call to be a priest, whereas he had felt the strongest desire to become a Christian Brother; and this call was all the more precise that his home had been frequented by the clergy, and all its prejudices were in favor of the priesthood. In later years, when the same matter presented itself in the new light of experience, he could see no reason for changing his state, as he had never felt that strong impulse toward the sacerdotal life necessary to justify him in leaving the community in which his earlier and later aspirations had been fully satisfied. Deep reverence for the sacerdotal character is not an evidence of vocation to the priesthood, though accompanied by every quality of mind and heart demanded of the priest. A man must have received the special call of Christ to justify his entrance into orders. Brother Azarias never felt that he had been so honored, and thus he remained in his humble state.

He was as pleased as a child by the complimentary notice of his literary work in the press of the day, and felt as much elation over a bit of praise from the *Wayback Eagle* as from the *Critic*. It was not vanity, but simplicity of soul. His immediate friends were never weary of telling him in a bantering way how far he fell below the mark in any of his achievements; in return for which banter he triumphantly produced the sorry clippings from obscure journals, and defied our criticism. One was not always cer-



tain of his motive on these occasions, for his humor was as deep as his thought and as silent. Often he seemed to be laughing to himself at the happy stupidity of mankind. He presented me with a copy of the life of De La Salle at a moment when the work of that illustrious educator was engaging my attention. The text was good, and Kathleen O'Meara had made a fine translation of it from the French. But the notes in the margin were better than text or translation, little lodes of erudition, which proved how well their writer had studied certain manuscripts in the libraries of Paris, and how well he knew where to look for his authorities. They were real contributions to the value of the book, true illuminations of the text. Brother Azarias came in one day while I was poring over these notes. "What do you think of the book?" said he, "Very well," I replied, "but, in the name of heaven, who wrote the footnotes? They are admirable, better than the book, interesting to the last degree." His face flushed with pleasure as he admitted that he had written them, having been in Paris at the time the book was brought out, and engaged in reading up for the work on the schools of the Middle Ages. I was profuse in my praise, although not competent to utter a discriminating eulogy in such a matter.

Of work like the notes he had much on hand among his papers, for it was his habit to keep a careful record of his reading and to let no valuable matter sink out of sight once he had brought it to the surface. He was a regular visitor to the libraries of the city, and drew upon the stores of Harvard and Brown universities. In the Astor li-

brary he often worked all day, lingering until the last window was darkened and the keeper requested his departure. He was no longer able to keep up severe reading of this kind, and always came home exhausted. When a little refreshment and supper had somewhat restored him, I usually took the opportunity to describe the kind of biography I might write of him within ten years; to which banter he always replied by describing the book he meant to write on the pleasant art of living long. Its strong point would be the fourscore years of the author.

Few as were the years in store for him, they might have been lengthened perhaps by a more sparing use of his remaining vitality, in which he did not seem particularly interested. He had been near death twice or thrice, and on one occasion had been actually in his agony. The prayers for the dying were recited for him, and he had felt himself slipping away into the deeps of eternity. "How did you feel at that moment?" said I, "resigned, enthusiastic, indifferent, or melancholy?" "I simply felt I was in a hole," said he, "and that the only thing to do was to submit *stolically*. All things seemed to have slipped from me, and I went floating into unknown depths of silence and darkness, where the only sound was the far-off prayers of those around my bed. Presently I came back, got my grip on realities again, and felt that I was going to live." Said I, "How evident it is that you are not a saint." Said he, "Take the warning. If after twenty-five years of community life I took death so hard, what will be the last anguish of the modern editor?"

His immediate superiors thought much of him,

and, appreciating the full value of such a man to the Institute and to society, gave him every opportunity and often unusual advantages in taking care of his strength. The luxuries at the disposal of a community are little less than rude, and the invalid able to do a little work has a hard time of it. The only hope for the sick monk is the sanitarium where the trained nurse and the special cooking are elements to be depended upon. If he remains in community the chances are that the robust and simple food will kill him. Brother Azarias took his meals with the community and ate next to nothing, but he had a refuge in the chaplain's table, where some of the hygienic elegancies were to be found; and on great occasions there were such things as judicious courses, tastefully provided by the fine instinct of the editor's faithful scout. Moreover, the kindness of friends more rarely provided a little dinner or a lunch, where life might be studied for a brief hour through the medium of sound and tempting viands. There was such an occasion at a reception given to the Duke of Veragua, lineal descendant of Columbus, by the members of the Catholic Club. But Brother Azarias was not present, though he had an invitation. His superiors were getting scrupulous as to his health, and would not permit late hours even to honor the lineal descendant of the great discoverer. Vainly we pleaded in his behalf, while the author of so many fine books stood by patiently awaiting the effect of our appeals. He joined in our petitions humbly, but the refusal was peremptory; and while we hurried away to add lustre to the Duke's reception, Brother Azarias, like a good and obedient monk, went to bed.

There were many visitors in those days to the Institute on Central Park, and a little book might be written on their character and the incidents that marked their visits. One night came a man of eminence, the son of a distinguished author who took away the editor's breath incidentally by a reference to Newman. We were discussing some literary topic, and I happened to mention Callista, saying in parenthesis to the guest, "You have read Callista, of course?" "I never read heretics," was the withering reply which it was thought proper to ignore at the time, and which Brother Azarias explained afterward by telling me that the literary light was a tremendous admirer of the English Ward. Just before Congress had settled the locality of the World's Fair of 1893, when the contest for the honor was very keen apparently between Chicago and New York, we entertained a party of friends from Chicago at tea. Some one was describing the variety of uses to which the Western city put its commercial hog, concluding with the remark that no part of the animal went to waste except the squeal. "You can utilize even that," said Brother Azarias, "when New York gets the fair." The confusion of the guests was hardly atoned for by the victory of Chicago over New York in securing the fair.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE METROPOLIS.

THESE glimpses of Brother Azarias as he followed the pleasant routine of life in the Institute afford a fair insight into his daily experiences, his passing opinions during the four years preceding his death. He had important relations with the world without at the same time, but their importunity never got beyond the college door. In the American metropolis there are three circles of intellectual activity, of which one has the field almost to itself, while the others cultivate a certain insignificance, as far as public life is concerned. The "nothingarian" idea informs the literature of the time, the press, and the educational system supported by the State. In these departments of activity no one may mention religion except as a phenomenon of human nature or in the way of polite ridicule. The popular writer avoids in his tales and essays the name of God unless as an expletive; the official of the school department talks glibly of Rousseau, Voltaire, Swinburne at his will, but would not dare to name Jesus Christ except in company with Mahomet, Luther, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, and in the same plane; the editor reads the times from the standpoint of Marcus Aurelius or Herbert Spencer, and when he praises

Dante is careful to mention his attack on a contemporaneous Pope; the reviewer is inclined to drop into the waste-basket all books that savor of positive Christianity, while very careful to advertise the filth of Paris and the agnosticism of anywhere; the libraries admit sectarian books, as they are called, only under protest, and provide their shelves liberally with the non-sectarian of all kinds; the theories of popular education are taken from the poisoned wells of materialism; all things work for "nothingarianism" with tremendous power. This is the dominant force in the chief intellectual circle of New York.

The next powerful dominates the Protestant body, which works steadily in the matters of education, art, and literature with the "nothingarians," and opposes them in nothing, unless the *vis inertiae* may be taken for opposition. The Protestant body has temporarily abandoned the cause of religion in popular education, fearing that Catholicity might gain more than itself in such a cause. Its churches daily become less Christian in their teaching, and more positive in their presentment of ethics connected with Christ in name, but not in fact. It is active in behalf of missions to the heathens, but somewhat dull in the work among the poor unbelievers at its doors. It has no influence, or exercises none, in the fields of art, science, literature, journalism, and politics, which are given over to the materialists and indifferentists. Its activity and vigor in some directions are astonishing, but they seem to be the qualities of a private corporation bent upon personal acquisition, rather than of a great body pursuing a great mission. The



point to be made against the Protestant body here is that it willingly plays second fiddle in the metropolis to the dominant power above described.

Between it and the materialists, like a giant asleep, lie the million of Catholics who form the true Christian body in the metropolis. It would take some space to describe and explain the conditions in which this body lives, to diagnose its weaknesses, and to account for its inefficiencies. It has numbers and wealth, its members are in every grade of society, in every profession and calling, in public office, in high political positions. Its parish, educational, and charity organizations are of the best. In that greater New York which is now forming it will number probably one-half the population. Here pleasant description of it must end. In all other matters it does not enjoy, has not earned, eminence worthy of its powers. In the use of the press, for example, it cannot compete with the Protestant body, which employs that tremendous agent for good and evil with considerable effect. It is without really capable and properly conducted journals. Those printed in its name, without proper support from the people, struggle along in a miserable existence, edited by ill-paid writers, or by the scissors, just able to instruct but rarely to entertain. The monthly magazines are in the hands of the religious communities, whose members do most of the literary work, while outside contributions are so poorly paid for that the editors can rarely afford to secure the aid of strong writers. A few popular libraries and still fewer private libraries minister to the taste for reading, and give proper aid to the student of Catholic questions; but the grand majority

of Catholics seem unprovided for, and live uninterested in this important matter.

The result is that the average Catholic citizen is ignorant of all things concerning his religion save parish matters and press news. No one knows any one.

How often this fact was thrust upon distinguished visitors can be seen from instances like the following, in which Brother Azarias more than once must have taken part. Scene: a parlor; persons, a literary man and his artist wife receiving a friend who has brought a distinguished personage. The friend speaks:

"Permit me to introduce to you Mr. R. C. Scriptor." Accent on the name, which does not seem to strike the sub-consciousness of the hosts. The friend adds: "Author of the well-known romance, 'Folly.'" "Indeed," from the hosts, meaning that they had never heard of it before. Persevering friend: "Published in the *Papal Globe*." Hosts: "Dear me, where is that magazine published?" Confusion of author and friend, who was one of the publishers. At one time a group of gentlemen proposed that a reception be given to the novelist Marion Crawford. Who is he? was the general question. The next was, Is he a Catholic? Then they fuddled over the invitation to such an extent and made such a mess of it that Mr. Crawford took it for an invitation to lecture and sent his secretary to make terms. There are no learned societies among Catholics, though they enjoy the presence of many well-read and even learned men. The taste for concerted action is non-existent, except in parish affairs. The habits of the American sect,

small as the habits of a frontier community, seem to have fixed the Catholics of the metropolis in a groove of littleness of mind and action.

Nevertheless, they gave Brother Azarias a cordial welcome on his return from Europe, when he took up his residence at De la Salle Institute, and always treated him with real appreciation, both priests and people. Beyond the social welcome they had nothing else to give. However, the non-Catholic world found him out quickly, and made earnest demands upon his talents. He was invited to lecture before societies which studied Dante, or philosophy, or educational methods. Certain colleges and universities invited him to lecture before their students. The literary and educational reviews and the editors of technical libraries invited him to contribute to their publications. The feeling of these people was well expressed by Hon. Andrew D. White, once President of Cornell, and at present minister to Germany: "The breadth and depth of Brother Azarias' view of literature is a revelation to me, and had I known he was giving such lectures I would have urged him, during my presidency of Cornell, to present them there to our students." There is no prejudice of the small kind among the American leaders. They were willing to give the Christian Brother at least as fair a hearing, if he had anything to say, as the Theosophist or the Buddhist. And they were delighted at the freshness of thought, the accuracy of statement, and the beauty of interpretation which this man brought to the study of great poets and educational problems.

In a short time they had provided him with as much work as he cared to do. Perhaps their appre-

ciation of his worth awakened the interest of his brethren of the faith later, but he had been in New York three years before his co-religionists asked extensively for his services. About the time of his arrival in the city the movement had begun which is certainly destined to accomplish great things for the culture of Catholics in this country; the establishment of reading circles, as they are called, on a fixed plan, and the foundation of the summer schools. The former is the old-fashioned society for intellectual improvement in which a debate took place, or an essay was read, or an author discussed, for the benefit of members; with this difference, however, that the reading circle devotes itself to following courses of reading in literature, history, or science, and studies the careers and works of Catholic authors for the purpose of making these neglected persons better known. ✓ The Chautauqua Assembly which gathers annually at a place near Buffalo had made these reading circles widely known, and for many years enterprising Catholics in different parts of the country had carried on similar circles in their parishes. The Paulist community of New York first undertook the work of uniting these scattered circles into one body, which gave rise to the Columbian Reading Union; a number of Catholics in Youngstown, Ohio, followed suit with the Catholic Educational Union, which found a sphere in the middle West. Thus was the new enterprise launched, and its most important consequence, among many very meritorious, was the foundation of the summer schools of the East and the West, and the winter schools of New Orleans.

The initial step of these movements, in the opinion

of many, was the first Catholic congress held in Baltimore in the fall of 1889. It was a simple affair, which lent lustre to the celebration of the centenary of the hierarchy rather than accomplished any set task. The prelates of the country were present as spectators, priests and laymen were the delegates from nearly all the States of the Union, a multitude of Catholics attended the sessions out of curiosity; there were the usual debates, resolutions, and receptions, and then the congress adjourned to attend the opening of the Catholic University at Washington. The significance of the affair lay in the fears of the timid and in the fact that this was the entering wedge for other congresses. A current of affrighted expectation circled and sighed under the smooth surface of the orderly sessions morning and afternoon. Nothing came of it to be sure, but the timid went home thanking God that the Church escaped unharmed. The Catholics who assembled in Baltimore were highly pleased with one another, and spent more time in social reunions than in studying questions and framing resolutions; and they vowed on parting to meet again as often as the bishops could be persuaded to assemble the clergy and laity in social or sentimental assembly.

As a matter of fact the Catholic body had been hungering for years for such reunions, so common in Europe, so infrequent here. They have had altogether only two congresses in eight years, but have been satisfying their desires on this point with other forms of assembly. Hence the popularity of the summer and winter schools, which, like all first expressions of popular feeling, have met with as much

sour criticism and misunderstanding as was to be desired for their healthy development. The schools and the congresses were the means of introducing Brother Azarias personally to his brethren in the faith. He attended the opening session of the Champlain school in the city of New London, Conn., in 1892, and delivered a few lectures of that quality which drew to him the affectionate regard of all sorts of people wherever he went—so deep, sweet, rich, and convincing were his thoughts and his arguments. He was at once engaged for a course of lectures at the next session. Following upon this came an invitation to speak before the second Catholic congress to be held in Chicago in 1893, and another to address the Parliament of Religions, a peculiar feature of the celebrations in honor of Columbus and the quadro-centenary of the discovery of the continent. A fourth request was to lecture before a summer school of philosophy in the Adirondacks. The demands poured in upon him from many parts of the country, from his brethren and from non-Catholics alike. It was very pleasant to him, this evidence of the spring. It came too late for his pleasure unhappily, just as the sad doors of death were opening wide for him.

His superiors, anxious for a life so precious, were dubious over the work mapped out for the summer of 1893 in the East and the West. With his weak heart and lungs, his capricious appetite, and the distressing heats of the climate, they hardly felt justified in granting the needed permission, willing as they were that he should spend himself wisely for his people. One of his closest friends had premonitions of the



end, and told him of them, advising him to make the July retreat with special care, and to stand prepared for consequences. He made his last retreat with this warning in mind, and assured his friend as he set out for the scene of his death, that all was well with him, and he stood ready to go north, west, or heavenward; but adding that he would yet write a book on the art of living long, when he had taken his degree of seven decades from the university of time. At any rate, he had lived to see the dawn of a better day for the intellectual life in America, both among Catholics and indifferent believers. He was the first to feel the sun of the morning. Standing at the head of his own department, he was the first object visible to students examining the problem of the Catholic development in America. He was the first to feel their honesty and sincerity, when they invited him to explain his people and their beliefs before them. He was among the first to see the day which was coming for his brethren through their activity on the one hand, and from the frank inquiry of outsiders on the other. And he had done very much before his departure to smooth first difficulties and to make the rough ways plain for both parties.



HOTEL CHAMPLAIN WHERE BROTHER AZARIAS DIED



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### CLOSING SCENES.

THE Champlain Summer School began its second session in July, 1893, and Brother Azarias delivered his last course of lectures under its patronage. The place of the meeting was Plattsburgh, a pretty town on the western shore of Lake Champlain, near the Canadian line. The enthusiasm with which the idea of a Catholic summer school had been greeted the previous year, when the first session was held in New London, had encouraged the founders to form a corporation and attempt the work of a permanent school. The site finally chosen had the advantage of picturesque location on one of America's most beautiful and historic lakes, which had been the scene, in the early history of the land, of Champlain's explorations, of the last struggle between the English and French for the possession of the continent, and of important events in the American wars with England. Burgoyne's army had marched and sailed through the neighborhood on its way to the trap set for it by Schuyler, and sprung by Gates near Saratoga. Benedict Arnold had been beaten in a naval battle fought off Valcour Island a few miles from Plattsburgh. Commodore McDonough defeated a British fleet in the vicinity during the war of 1812. The region is wild and romantic, and the Adirondack mountains

dip their feet into the waters of the lake on the west shore, while the east is guarded by the verdant peaks of the Green Mountains of Vermont.

It is an ideal spot for the American institution called the summer school, which has become a feature of the educational scheme gradually taking shape in the United States. The Catholics who assembled in Plattsburgh were of the kind which so deeply appreciated the assemblage of their brethren in the first Catholic congress held in 1889—thinking people, reading people, who had longed for opportunities of knowing their own brethren and leaders from other States, and were eager to be doing much for the intellectual development of American Catholics. The popularity of the summer school had already been tested by Protestants, but uncertainty existed as to Catholic feeling about the scheme. Within three years of the experiment at New London, a summer school had been opened in Wisconsin by the Catholics of the West, and a novelty in the shape of a winter school had been founded in New Orleans, under the direct encouragement of the Archbishop, Mgr. Janssens.

— Of this movement, and of its predecessors, the reading unions, Brother Azarias was an earnest promoter. He had seen the fruits of these organizations among non-Catholics in his many visits as a lecturer to educational assemblages of every kind. He was eager to see their effective work begin among Catholics, and he took early opportunity to urge his friends in the Paulist community to undertake the work of uniting the reading circles of the country in one grand body, for the study and dissemination of Catholic

truth. He gave his advice and aid in the enterprise, encouraged the workers, and often did part of the editorial work of circulars and announcements, explaining the object in view. It was for these circles many of his minor essays were written. When collected they made the charming volume, "Books and Reading," which has had so extensive and flattering a sale, and deserves to run into its hundredth edition. At the second gathering of the summer school on Lake Champlain, he saw the first fruits of his helpfulness to the laborers in the field. The enterprising citizens of the town, eager to have the school located permanently in the neighborhood of Plattsburgh, had united with the railroad company in offering the trustees inducements. Four hundred acres of land on the lake were offered to the school authorities in fee simple, with the usual conditions of use and improvement. Thenceforward the enterprise had a location and a name, and the first debt had been escaped.

In the charming opera-house of the town the first lectures were given. The summer-time in the north is of heavenly beauty and comfort, with temperate days and cool nights, and air which breathes the perfume and health of the Adirondack woods. It was no labor to listen to the dullest lecture in the pleasant auditorium of the opera-house. The subjects dwelt upon by Brother Azarias were anything but dull to a Catholic audience. A description of them has been given in an earlier chapter of this book, wherein is treated the work which he accomplished for pedagogic science. It will be sufficient to quote here from the words of a distinguished writer who



attended the lectures, Richard Malcolm Johnston: "His task was to give account of the schools of the Middle Ages. How sufficiently he performed it, all of us who were then present remember well. Upon this theme he had bestowed the same tireless, painstaking, unerring researches that marked his other investigations. | For a long time men had named this the Dark Age. Montalembert's 'Monks of the West' went far to expose the misnomer. Most outsiders from the Church still so denote it, although some of them admitted this to be unjust, like Sidney Lanier, who said to me one day: 'Call this the Dark Age? It was the Bright!' The audience of Brother Azarias was as surprised as delighted at the stores of learning acquired by him on the history of this period. . . . We wondered how well he knew the Middle Ages, their schools and universities, every grade in every period, the curricula of their studies, their classifications, their partitions of work and recreation, their incentives both emulative and punitive, all items of their discipline down to De La Salle, the illustrious founder of his own order. Day after day the end of his hour, more than once not noted by himself, cut off the stream of precious instruction to be continued on the morrow, leaving us at last with the conviction that he had much to tell that could not all be told in the week allotted to him. And to remember that he then was dying! I recall distinctly his last words to me. When I remarked that his lecture stopped several minutes before the hour, he replied: 'I am not well.' Then he went his way, but I did not think I was to see his face no more."

Brother Azarias completed his lectures in fine spir-

its, though exhausted and feverish when he left the stage for the last time. He enjoyed to the full the congratulations of sympathetic friends and admirers. The fine air, the appreciation of his work, the thought of the work still to be done at the conventions in Chicago, filled him with courage. He walked part of the way to his hotel, which stood some miles outside the town on a bluff overlooking the lake, and remained some time on the open verandas in conversation with a friend. The cool night air gave him a chill. He retired early, with symptoms of a cold. In the morning he was feverish, and in a few hours the doctors detected the presence of pneumonia, his old enemy, which had broken his health in previous years. To a man of his weak body such a disease meant death, and he made his preparations accordingly. His retreat in the month of July had been a true preparation, so that little was left to be done at the last moment. He received the last sacraments, and during the two weeks of his illness had the Holy Communion often brought to him. His brother and his two sisters were constantly at his bedside. Their loving care, and faithful attendance on the part of physicians and nurses, actually conquered the pneumonia, which ran its course and departed from him at the usual time. His vitality in fighting the disease was remarkable. But when the disease left him there was no rallying power to take hold on life again. Exhaustion was complete. He slept away the hours, helpless but without pain or anxiety. At the end of two weeks it was clear that his end was near. Once more he received the Holy Communion in full understanding of his condition, and then fell asleep, to

wake no more on this earth. Early in the morning of Sunday, August 20th, 1893, he gave up his soul to God, having just entered his forty-seventh year and completed a religious life of three decades as a Brother of the Christian Schools.

His funeral service took place in the New York Cathedral the following week, and was an honorable tribute on the part of the entire community to the character and labors of the distinguished teacher. Representatives from his community, from the different religious orders, from various teaching institutions, from the Catholic summer school, and from the clergy; citizens of rank, officials of the city government, friends and admirers of every rank and condition, filled the cathedral and paid the last tribute of respect to the humble monk who had done so much in his brief life for the honor of his country and the glory of his faith. The solemn Mass was sung by the Rector of the Cathedral, and the funeral sermon preached by an intimate friend of Brother Azarias, Rev. Joseph McMahon, who took for his text the words of the Angel in the book of Tobias: "I am Azarias, the help of God, son of the great Ananias, the grace of God." The interpretation which the preacher put upon the life and character of Brother Azarias is worth quoting as a complement to what has already been written in this book.

"The text that I have dared to borrow from Holy Writ," said Father McMahon, "seems to me to express what we all feel concerning the life of Brother Azarias; for the vigor of his mature intellect and the sanctity of his life rendered him beautiful; his unquestioning faith made him a true child of Israel; and

certainly in speech and in the written word he has led us into the country of the Medes, walking through all the ways thereof, benefiting the dwellers therein, as well as those who yielded themselves up to his guidance. . . . In the beauty of his life, as we whose souls were knit to his know it, we see indeed that he was an angel of God, sent to us to be our 'Azarias, the help of God.' The lesson of his life I conceive to be illustrated plainly in that name which was his by a curious coincidence. . . . As a teacher his pupils felt the impress of his personality. Timid, retiring, diffident in ordinary life, when placed upon the platform he was transfigured before his audience, and held them with the magnetic power of his intellectual ability. . . . The power of a teacher is best felt, not indeed by those whose minds are capable of thinking with him, but by those whose minds bow in unconscious and instinctive submission to the seal of intellectual authority. That authority he exercised equally over the youngest child in his classroom, and the oldest mind that received the clear stream of precious and eloquent language that poured from his lips. The strongest power we know is the power of soul over soul. When one is present with us, the impress of his personal appearance, the beauty of his voice, the fire of his eye, the expression of his face—all are concomitant circumstances increasing his power. Remove his personality, and you then have the true test of his abiding power. The man, therefore, who commanded the admiration of those who had never seen or heard him, and who knew him only through the imperfect written word, has the best testimony we can seek of this great power. That admiration

has been recorded in every line of criticism concerning the work of Brother Azarias.

“ . . . He had, as I conceive, two missions in his writings: one to help those whom he knew to be earnest in seeking the light of truth; the other to clear away the misrepresentations which tarnish the lustre and the beauty of that light. In all his books he has steadily kept these two purposes in view. And those who knew him, especially in the intimacy of personal friendship, will testify that his intellectual activity made him sympathize, not only with the sympathy springing from his religion, but with the deep sympathy springing from his sincere humanity, with the struggles of those earnest minds with whom he was in communion throughout the entire world. . . . His death, as his life, was edifying. Fortunately for him, being a public man and a religious teacher, his private life is safe from the feeble words of a panegyrist. He rests with God; he went sweetly and with resignation. His last hours were only a repetition of the many years of his life; charity, love for God, love for his neighbor, forgiveness of any who had done him wrong unconsciously (he did not believe that any would wrong him consciously), and a beseeching of grace and light and strength for those who had known him. . . . His life for the last ten years was only a living death. To those who knew him he taught a lesson of resignation, a lesson in his practical, personal life, that he has striven to teach in all his works. . . . His works indeed will follow him. Prepared by a fervent retreat on the eve of his last labor, sustained and encouraged in his noticeably feeble health by the deep interest shown in his lectures

and the cordial praise of grateful hearts and minds for his unselfish labors in the cause of truth, he went out of the world.

“ . . . I have not alluded at all to his private life. I have said nothing of the simple, sincere, childlike piety, with which friends and superiors were acquainted; but I cannot close without saying that one of his books which pictured best his own heart was a panegyric of the Queen of Heaven. He was a knight, a true and chivalrous knight of the Blessed Mother; her image was always about him, her chaplet was always in his hand, her praises were ever on his lips. Even in his purely critical writings he has known how to bring her garland after garland of beautiful flowers, culled in the garden of the world's literature. In her honor he has gleaned many a sheaf from fields cultivated by Catholic genius. To her kind care we commit him now; to his Mother we commit her son and knight. To her gentle power, to her sweet intercession before the throne of the Master he served, we may entrust, in all sincerity and security, the eternal destiny of our dear friend; certain that through her prayers God will bless him, and that his good works will win for him through the grace of Jesus Christ the glory of heaven.”

The body of Brother Azarias was taken by his relatives, with the kind permission of his superiors, to the cemetery where reposed the remains of his father and mother, and laid to rest with them. It was an honorable home-coming for the son of the great Seymour's friend, and his body made memorable a ground already honored by the bones of great men. Seymour, Conkling, and Kernan sleep in that



neighborhood, governor and senators in the Republic's most stormy times. He had been their neighbor and friend, and of the four, not belittling the great minds and great services of these others, he had chosen the better part and done the more permanent work for his own soul and for men.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE LAST WORD.

IT is remarkable that even at this date of the world's history the non-Catholic mind has extreme difficulty in comprehending such a man as Brother Azarias. The hereditary bias of three centuries, since Luther injected into his followers his necessary hatred for the monastic life—necessary because damnation of the monk alone could justify his career—has so constructed the non-Catholic mind that the very idea of the monk disturbs its natural equilibrium. Therefore when it becomes necessary either to admit the good sense and the holiness of Francis of Assisi and his kind, or to deny all historical evidence, the non-Catholic of sound culture usually has recourse to a gentle *hypothesis*. This supposes Francis to be above his creed, or ahead of his times, or superior to his source of inspiration. In any event, he is attached to the chain of fancy which strings together Marcus Aurelius, Arius, Augustine, Berengarius, Wyckliffe, Francis de Sales, Martin Luther, Voltaire, and Herbert Spencer. How often Brother Azarias laughed at this extraordinary freak of the human imagination! He himself was threatened during his life with a place on the chain. And lest the attempt be repeated, the biographer hastens to put in a disclaimer in advance.

He was a son of the Church and a monk as thoroughly as the world understands these terms. He knew the gentle hypothesis and despised it. Once a man of high literary ability, not a Catholic, warmly praised his "Philosophy of Literature," its depth of thought, sound philosophy, scholarship, facile expression, and clear argument; and closed a long review with an eloquent apostrophe to the author, inviting him to leave the sterile bosom of the Church of Rome, and to nourish his thought and illumine his mind at the fountains of the nineteenth century. Brother Azarias was highly amused at this invitation, whose sincerity he respected, but whose wisdom was doubtful, since it would have removed him from the very source of those powers whose manifestations the critic so much admired in his writings.

The fancies of non-Catholic minds on such matters as the monastic life are partly amusing, partly regrettable, for they show a real weakness of intellect. Certain materialists, Mr. John Morley for instance, display greater mental balance than their Protestant ~~compeers~~ <sup>confederates</sup> in matters touching the Catholic people. They recognize the full significance of Cardinal Newman's life, no less than that of Vincent de Paul's. These men were determined churchmen, advocates and children of the Roman Catholic Church, supporters and practicers of the monastic life. They are an argument against materialism, and no less an argument against Protestantism. But though the force of the argument is felt, there is no attempt to prove that these men were ahead of their age, or greater than their own beliefs, or hypocrites to themselves, in order to make them out the proper predecessors of

Hegel, Comte, Hume, and Mill. No; the materialist takes them as they stand, grounds his arguments and illustrations on the undoubted human nature of these men, and accepts their mysticism, devotion to Christ and the Church, belief in eternal life, as regrettable mental deformities, but not to be avoided in their conditions, no more than rheumatism, malaria, lameness, and other physical troubles can sometimes be avoided. This acceptance of the inevitable shows good sense.

Brother Azarias had read all that our opponents have to say against Catholicity and the life of the monk. He was an American, living in the full glare of the nineteenth century. He was well acquainted with the hypothesis which makes out acceptable Catholic saints to be as Protestant as Marcus Aurelius. He appreciated the times in which he lived, with their facilities for easy travelling and extensive reading. Nevertheless he remained a monk and a Catholic, and he thought it was fine to die in both characters.

He stood with all his might for the best expression of the principle which gives the spiritual the first place in the training of the young; not merely in that ambiguous sense recognized by such teachers as Professor Butler, of Columbia, but as the Catholic Church would have her teachers everywhere stand for a great principle. Believers in the immortal soul of man of necessity must place the eternal life and all things pertaining to it far ahead of the earthly life. It is not enough that they announce the principle; their actions must be informed by it to the end of time.

Brother Azarias could never understand the mania, which possessed American Protestants in large numbers, for relegating the spiritual training of the child to the home circle and the catechism class, when the mind and the body are honored with five or six hours a day of training, carried on by specially trained teachers, under the most expensive system in the world. The violent contrast between the care of the soul and the care of the mind led him to believe, as it has led so many of all classes, that there is no practical belief in the spiritual life among the larger part of Americans.

He was confirmed in this belief by the persistent refusal of American educators to understand the favor with which the entire anti-Christian fraternity support the colorless and unspiritual school. In every country the atheists have bent all their energies to make the public school, if not hostile, at least indifferent to Christianity. The pretence is always universal education, the uplifting of the masses. The pretence in America is broadness of training. Brother Azarias used his lance freely on both pretences, and labored with all his might to exalt the spiritual among his brethren of the school, that by love of the true principle and method they might come to despise and reject the false. His work bears the emphasis and the beauty of the spiritual on every page. It is inspiring to know that a monk brings back to many Americans the light which they themselves so foolishly extinguished. It is encouraging to hear a prominent educator ask and answer before ten thousand teachers the question, What knowledge is of most worth? Professor Butler's answer is:

"That knowledge is of most worth which stands in closest relation to the highest forms of the activity of the Spirit, created in the image of Him who holds nature and man alike in the hollow of His hand."

The gentle hypothesis already mentioned has discovered for itself a mission, against which the Catholic world will have to be on guard. Brother Azarias was among the first to sound a warning. His investigations into the education of the Middle Ages had led him to conclusions similar to the truest of Maitland's. He was convinced by the records, as every Catholic is sure by instinct, that a tremendous injustice has been done to the people of those times by their prejudiced and ill-informed descendants; and he was also convinced that the day is not distant when honest investigators will free the early ages from the outrageous incubus of slander piled upon their history by the malice of bigotry. He foresaw, too, the part which the gentle hypothesis would be likely to play when light came to shine on the Dark Ages. We have a foretaste of it in the serious and comic attempts of the time to make out St. Patrick a Methodist, and St. Augustine of Canterbury an exact premiss whose proper conclusion is Cranmer or any of his successors. The attempt against which he warned us will be that of seizing the best in that long period from the fall of the Roman Empire to the rise of Luther, dubbing it anti-Catholic, and naming all the abominations of history "Popish." This is the mission discovered for itself by the gentle hypothesis.

No one will blame us for a vigorous impatience if this thing should come to pass. That for three centuries and a half the advocates of the Lutheran and



the English revolt should have vilified, misnamed, and slandered the Christians of a period covering twelve hundred years; that, in order to justify their own contentions, the formation of Christendom and its rise to glory should have been made more horrible to men than the worst ages of paganism; that the age which saw the light of Christ slowly pierce the night of barbarism should have been stigmatized before any age of the world's history as Dark; that the defenders of the Dark Ages should have been held up for years as fit illustrations of the degradation of those times; and then, when the aims of the slanderers had been accomplished, that their children should suddenly admit there was much good in the ancient world, claim it as their own, and proceed to throw further dirt upon the only friends of mediæval honesty and sanctity—what an excuse for wrath on our part, what a natural exhibition of effrontery on theirs!

The thing has already been done in single instances. Has not Fenelon been held up to admiration as a Jansenist, a lowly victim of the devouring Papacy? Has not St. Francis of Assisi been pictured as a sort of Wesley without a wife and clothed in a brown robe! The old fashion of the gentle hypothesis was to take up with the contumacious, the heretical, and the schismatical in each age, and establish a chain which led by various links from Luther to Augustine, and from him to the Apostolic age. Thus were Wyckliffe, Huss, the Waldenses, Berengarius, Pelagius, Tertullian, and others honored with historical beatification. But advance has been made. There is nothing too good, of all that was good, in the past ages of Christianity, for the supporters of the

gentle hypothesis. As their ancestors stole the good name of the first twelve centuries, so they now are dreaming of making away with the hidden treasures of those times. Against this Brother Azarias warned his brethren, and labored most earnestly. Much better, he thought, that the materialist should describe those times than the Protestant without conscience or blinded by prejudice; for the former has little to gain or to lose for his argument by the religious profession of a people, and describes their religion as candidly as that of the Medes and Persians. It is of no concern to him. But the latter would never so much as glance at the early ages did he not have some injury to do them. It is certain that within a century we shall know the Dark Ages nearly as well as we know the present time. Investigation is active, and much of it is honest. But Catholics will have to take measures against the gentle hypothesis, serious measures, if they are not to lose for a time at least their prescriptive right to the calumniated centuries.

It will be seen from the preceding paragraphs what a debt Brother Azarias has placed upon us by his fine labors in behalf of the spiritual life, and by his exposition of one feature of life in the Dark Ages. The only return his brethren can make him is that which he would most desire: to profit by his example and continue the work on the same strong lines. He has placed under obligations not only his brethren of the faith, but the literary and educational circles of the country. They have not had in their history such an example of honesty, power, and industry combined, as this monk gave them, without thought of his own virtues or any desire to shine as a light upon a tower.

How much he taught them which they did not know before, they are able to tell; but it can be safely said that his presentation of the spiritual sense, his interpretation of Dante, the "Imitation," and "In Memoriam," with special regard to that sense, his splendid view of a general literature, and his picture of education past and present in the light of principle, are four new notes in the American scale.

His brethren of the Christian Brothers' Institute have deep reason to rejoice in the possession of him. They gave him to the service of his fellow-men. In their cloisters and in their spirit and by their methods he was trained. He is the fruit of those splendid principles and generous methods laid down by the blessed De La Salle, and perfected by his children year after year for over a century. His superiors recognized his talents in his youth, and gave him every encouragement to develop them. When his peculiar gifts came to be known with time, they released him from many lesser duties that he might attend to the greater, guarded him against mistakes and blunders, disposed all things to secure him liberty of action. As far as they were concerned the hard life of the community, but beautiful in its severity, was softened to meet his feeble health and his severe studies. He was everywhere received by his Brethren with consideration, for they understood his aims and the hard road by which he travelled toward them, when the outside world was not so considerate. It was to their credit that they presented to society not only a scholar, but a truly spiritual man. His soul was more to him than his study, and the soul of his brother more than the mere writing of books and

the display of knowledge. He clung to his community, feeling how sweet and honorable it was to die in the harness of his youth. The Brothers of the Christian Schools are worthy of sincere congratulation on the teacher, writer, and savant whom they sent into the forum.

And if he had very much to be grateful for to his Institute and his immediate superiors and lifelong friends, it is just to say that they will be forever in his debt for the return which he made them. His life has opened a door upon the community of the Christian Brothers, through which all the world may look and admire. In this humble but learned man Americans will read the career of every member of his community. They understand him because he spoke to them with eloquent tongue of things which they loved and partly comprehended, and appeared to them in the guise of an ordinary citizen, often in places free from the danger of Catholic infection. They do not understand his brethren except through him. Formerly they had no interest in the strange details of that life which the monk leads in the convent and in the schoolroom; they were not able to appreciate its motives and its sustaining power; they did not understand what significance should be attached to the education of the child, that men should so utterly devote themselves to compass it properly; and their prejudices were deep against the monk and the spiritual as he interpreted it. Or, in perfect indifference to the varieties of educators, they classed them all among the freaks and turned to the gods of the market-place, the popular gods, which any could understand. But, interested in Brother Azarias,

stirred by his work and its spirit, pleased by his courtesy and avoidance of controversy, delighted with his learning, convinced of his human nature, they came to grasp the fact that an American might be a monk, that a monk might be a human being, that learning is not foreign to the convent, that life runs pleasantly there, and that men pursue its course in a community as eagerly as elsewhere. Very noble and gracious to the American eye is the abstraction of life in a monastery when seen in the concrete in the person of Brother Azarias.

Here the task of the biographer ends. Undoubtedly he has said too much, so far as the wish of the departed Brother is concerned. So little of this world enters into the next that the puff of incense from a single volume must seem ridiculous to the distinguished dead. Yet it is not to please the shades such books are written, but to instruct the living and to keep a noble memory alive a little longer in forgetful souls. Perpetual honor to the name of Brother Azarias, and eternal rest to his soul!







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